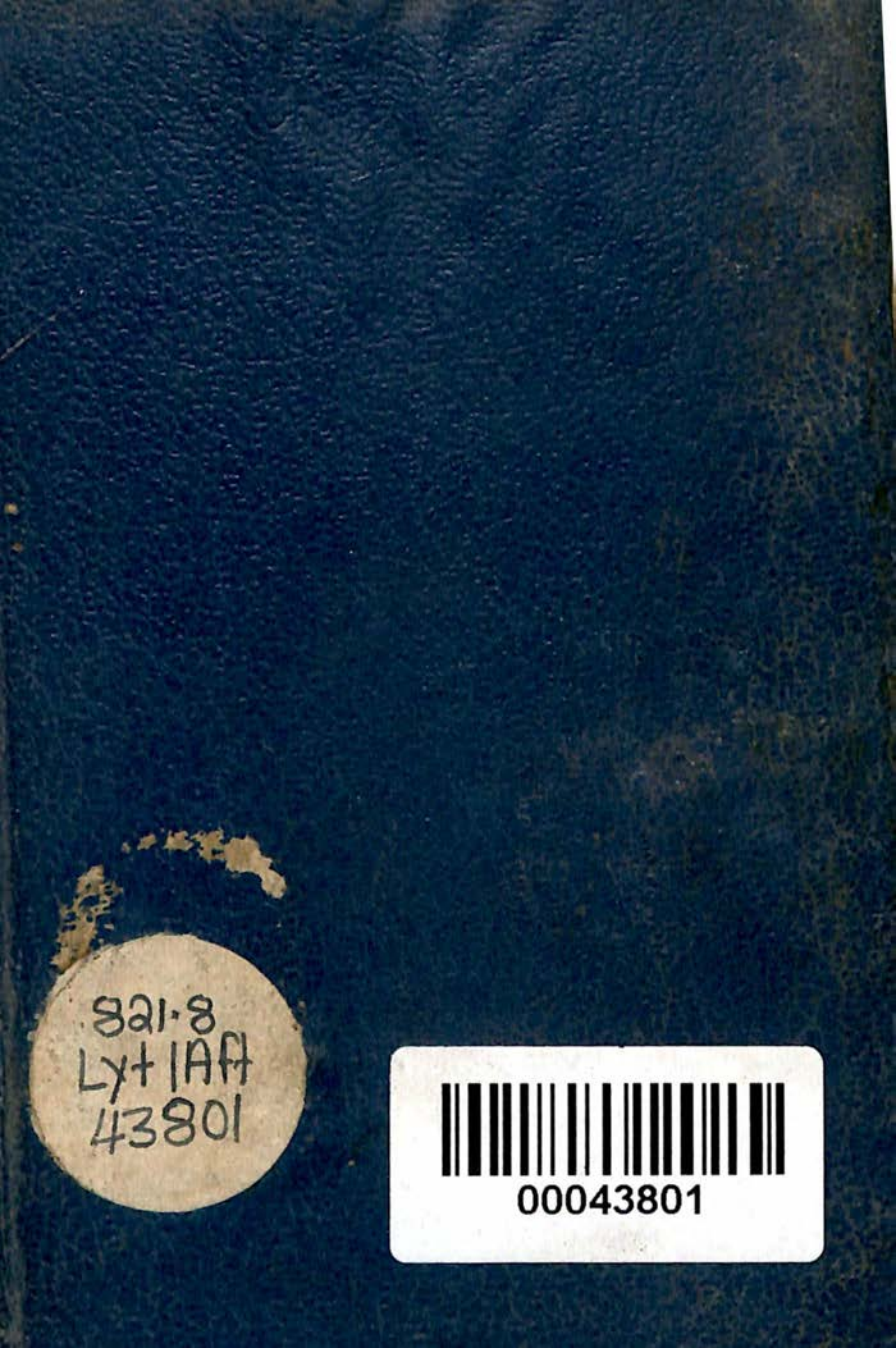
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AFTER PARADISE

OR LEGENDS OF EXILE.

AFTER PARADISE

OR LEGENDS OF EXILE

WITH OTHER POEMS

43801

BY

ROBERT, EARL OF LYTTON

(OWEN MEREDITH)

LONDON

DAVID STOTT, 370, OXFORD STREET, W

1887

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THE TITLARK'S NEST.

A PARABLE.

THE TITLARK'S NEST.

A PARABLE.

"Introite, nam et huic deii sunt."

Apud Gellium.

I.

WHERE o'er his azure birthplace still the smile
Of sweet Apollo kindles golden hours,
High on the white peak of a glittering isle
A ruin'd fane within a wild vine's bowers
Muffled its marble-pillar'd peristyle;
As under curls, that clasp in frolic showers
A young queen's brow, her antique diadem's
Stern grandeur hides its immemorial gems.

2.

The place was solitary, and the fane
Deserted save that where, in saucy scorn
Of desolation's impotent disdain,
The revelling leaves and buds and bunches born
From that wild vine along a roofless lane
Of mouldering marble columns roam'd, one morn
A titlark, by past grandeur unopprest,
Had boldly built her inconspicuous nest.

3.

And there where girt by priests and devotees
A god once gazed upon the suppliant throng,
Wild foliage waved by every wandering breeze
Now shelter'd one small bird; to whose lone song,
Companion'd by no choral minstrelsies,
An aged shepherd listen'd all day long.
Unlearn'd the listener and untaught the lay,
But blithe were both in their instinctive way.

4.

Thither once came a traveller who had read
Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, and had all
The terms of architecture in his head,
Apophyge, and plinth, and astragal.
He, from below, had in its leafy bed
Spied out the carcass of an antique wall,
Keen as, from heaven, the hovering condor spies
Where, in the pampas hid, a dead horse lies.

5.

"Pelasgian? Nought doth old Pausanias say
About this ruin, and I find no plan
Or note of it in learnèd Caylus; nay,
I doubt not it was miss'd by Winckelmann.
The prize is mine. No joke, this hot noon-day,
To climb yon hill! But Science leads the van
Of Enterprise; and now's the chance to shame
The English Elgin's cheaply-purchased fame.

6.

"Ho, you there, yonder in the bramble-bush!"
The tired explorer to the shepherd cried,
"A drachma for thy guidance, friend!" But "Hush!"
The grey-hair'd herdsman of the hills replied.
Then, pointing upward to the leafage lush
That rippled round the ruin'd fane, with pride
He added "Hark, where yonder leaves are swinging,
The god's voice from his sanctuary singing!"

7.

The traveller laugh'd. "'Tis a *curruca* small,
The *Orphea*, I surmise, whose note we hear.
Her nest is haply in yon temple wall.
An earlier songstress she, and sings more clear,
Than her small northern cousin whom we call
Atricapilla Sylvia. But I fear,
My worthy friend, we must not deem divine
Each vagrant voice that issues from a shrine."

8.

"Yet," said the old man, with a pensive smile,
"I heard my mother tell when I was young
(And she, Sir, was a daughter of this isle)
How everything that's here had once a tongue,
In the old times. Myself, too, many a while
Have heard the streamlets singing many a song,
And, tho' their language was unknown to me,
The reeds were moved by it, as I could see.

9.

"Sir, when I was a boy I pastured here
My father's goats which now, Sir, are mine own.
For he is underground this many a year,
But he had lived his life, and Heaven hath shown
Much goodness to us, and my children dear
Are all grown up; and, musing here alone,
Oft have I wonder'd 'Could this temple break
Long silence, in what language would it speak?'

10.

"Full sure was I that if it spoke to me,
Whate'er its language, I should understand.
Then, I was young: and now, tho' old I be,
When sweet in heaven above the silent land
That voice I hear, my soul feels glad and free,
And I am fain to bless the god's command,
With welcome prompt responding to the voice
He sends from heaven to bid my heart rejoice.

11.

"Ah, not in vain its message have I heard!
And, Sir, tho' it may be, as you aver,
The voice comes only from a little bird,
Whose name, indeed, I never heard of, Sir,
And tho' I doubt not aught by you averr'd,
For you, Sir, seem a learnèd traveller,
Yet still the temple that contains the song
A temple is, and doth to God belong.

12.

"And haply to the little bird I hear
He may have said 'I am myself too high
For this poor man. Speak to him thou, speak clear,
And tell him, little bird, that he may lie
On consecrated ground and have no fear,
But listen to thy messages, and try
To understand.' And I have understood,
For when I listen, Sir, it does me good."

13.

"Humph!" said the traveller, "Worthy friend, live long
Ere yet thy children lay thee underground!
Pasture thy goats in peace, and may the song
Of many a titlark make thee pleasant sound,
Warbled all day thy cottage eaves among.
Such simple songs where simple hearts abound
Fit place may find, but not in halls where hoar
Poseidon haply held high state of yore."

14.

"Ay, Sir, it is but right," the old shepherd said,
"The little bird should to the god give place
Whenever he returns. But where is fled
The sacred Presence that once deign'd to grace
These lonesome haunts so long untenanted?
Roam where you will, the sanctuaried space
Is vacant, voiceless, priestless, unpossest,
Save for the bird that in it builds her nest.

15.

"Yet into this dead temple's heart hath flown
A voice of life, and this else-silent shrine
The bird whose nest is built in it hath known
How to make vocal. Thro' the trembling vine
Hark, the fresh carol! Till to claim his own
The god returns in all his power divine,
Still unforbidden let me hail the strain
That haunts with living song the lifeless fane."

LEGENDS OF EXILE.

FIRST SERIES.

MAN AND WOMAN.

"Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels."

PSALM viii.

I.

THE LEGEND OF POETRY.

I.

Adam and Eve, cast out of Paradise,
Wander'd along the wilderness forlorn,
Till all its unfamiliar sands and skies
Were one dim solitude without a bourne.
Then Eve, outwearied, sank upon the ground;
And, where she fell, motionless she remain'd.
Adam had climb'd a little barren mound
A few steps farther. There he stood, and strain'd
His backward gaze to the forbidden bound
Of Eden. Still their banisht lord could see,
Though faint in fading light, the happy bowers
Where nevermore his fallen mate and he
Might roam or rest, renewing griefless hours;
And Adam groan'd.

Meanwhile, unheard, unview'd,
Jehovah's arm'd Archangel, from the gate
He had shut forever, adown the solitude
And darkness of that world all desolate
The footsteps of the fugitives pursued.

Sudden he stood by Adam's side, and said,
"Man, thou hast far to go. It is not good
To look behind thee. Forward turn thy head!
Thither thy way lies." And the man replied
"I cannot." "What thou canst thou knowest not,"
The Archangel answer'd, "for thou hast not tried.
But trial is henceforth Man's earthly lot,
And what he *must* he *can* do." Adam cried
"What must I?" "Thou hast set aside God's word,
But canst not," said the Angel, "set aside
Necessity; whose bidding, tho' abhorr'd,
Obey thou must." And Adam ask'd in awe

"Is then Necessity another Lord?"
The Angel answer'd "'Tis another Law."
"Another Law! But me thy sweeping sword
Hath left not," Adam mutter'd, "hap what may,
Another Paradise to forfeit still.
What if that other Law I disobey?"
"Thou canst not," sigh'd the Seraph, "for thy will
Hath lost its freedom, which was yesterday
A part of Paradise. For good or ill
Necessity controls it. Wretch, thou art
Weary already, and thou fain wouldst sleep,
Yet sleep thou dost not, tho' thine eyelids smart
With the unwilling vigil they must keep;
'Tis thy necessity to think and wake.
To-morrow, thou wouldst wake and think. In vain!
Slumber unwill'd thy thoughts shall overtake,
And sleep thou shalt, tho' sleep thou wouldst not. Pain
Thou wouldst avoid, yet pain shall be thy lot.

Thou wouldst go forth—Necessity forbids,
Chains fast thy weakness to one hated spot,
And on thy shut wish locks her iron lids.
Thou wouldst know one thing, yet shalt know it not.
Thou wouldst be ignorant of another thing,
Yet canst not choose but know it. Unforgot
To thy reluctant memory shall cling
What thou wouldst fain forget, forgotten fleet
From foil'd remembrance on evasive wing
What thou wouldst fain remember. Change or cheat
Necessity, thou canst not."

Shuddering
Adam crouch'd low at the Archangel's feet,
And cried "Whate'er I *must* be, and whate'er
I *can* be, aid, O aid me, to forget
What I no longer *may* be! Even this bare
Inhospitable wilderness might yet

"To unremembering eyes seem all as fair
As Eden's self, nor should I more repine
Were I once more unable to compare."
"Poor wretch," the Angel said, "wouldst thou resign
All that remains to thee of Paradise?"
"Of Paradise is anything still mine?"
Sigh'd Adam, and the Angel answer'd "Yes,
The memory of it." "Thence," he groan'd, "arise
My sharpest torments. I should suffer less
If I could cease to miss what I survive."
"Wouldst thou the gift, then, of forgetfulness?"
The Seraph ask'd. And Adam cried, "Give! give!"

With looks uplift, that search'd the deeps of heaven,
Silent the Angel stood, till, as it were,
In response from the source of glory given
To that seraphic gaze, which was a prayer,
Reörient thro' the rifted dark, and high

O'er Eden, rose the dawn of such a day
As nevermore man's mourning eyes shall bless
With beauty that hath wither'd from his way,
And gladness that is gone beyond his guess.
The panting Paradise beneath it lay
Beatified in the divine caress
Of its effulgence; and, with fervid sigh,
All Eden's folded labyrinths open'd wide
Abysm within abysm of loveliness.
Thither the Archangel pointed, and replied:
"Adam, once more look yonder! Fix thine eye
Upon the guarded happiness denied
To the denial of its guardian law.
Contemplate thy lost Eden—the last time!"

And Adam lifted up his face, and saw
Far off the bowery lawns and blissful streams
Of Eden, fair as in his sinless prime,

And fairer than to love forbidden seems
The long'd-for face whose lips in dreams requite
Adoring sighs that, save in passionate dreams,
Are disallow'd idolatries. Dark night
Elsewhere above the lifeless waste was spread,
As o'er a dead face the blindfolding pall.
"Seest thou thy sinless past?" the Angel said.
And Adam moan'd, "All, all! I see it all,
And know it mine no more!"

His helmèd head,
As in obedience to some high command
Deliver'd to him by no audible word,
The Archangel bow'd. Then, with decisive hand,
He seized and drew his formidable sword.
Thro'-night's black bosom burn'd the plunging brand;
Two-edgèd fires, the lightnings of the Lord,
Flasht from its fervid blade, below, above,
And, where their brilliance thro' the darkness broke,

Clear from the zenith to the nadir clove
Man's sunder'd universe. At one dread stroke
The Archangelic sword had hewn in twain
The substance of Eternity.

There ran
The pang and shudder of a fierce surprise
Thro' Adam's soul; and then he slept again
As he had slept before, when he (likewise
In twain divided—Man and Woman) began
His double being.

Upon the night-bound plain,
In two vast fragments, each a dim surmise,
Eternity had fallen—one part toward man,
The other part toward man's lost Paradise.
The light of Eden by its fall was crost,
And in its shadow vanisht—save one gleam
Of faintly-lingering glory that was lost
In Adam's slumber, and became—A Dream.

* * * * * *

Adam had lost his memory by the stroke
Of that celestial sword's transfixing flame,
And so forgot his dream when he awoke.
Yet did its unremember'd secret claim
Release from dull oblivion's daily yoke
In moments rare. He knew not whence they came,
Nor was it in his power to reinvoke
Their coming: but at times thro' all his frame
He felt them, like an inward voice that spoke
Of things which have on earth no utter'd name;
And sometimes like a sudden light they broke
Upon his darkest hours, and put to shame
His dull despondency, his ferce unrest,
His sordid toil, and miserable strife.
These rare brief moments Adam deem'd his best,
And call'd them all THE POETRY OF LIFE.

II.

THE LEGEND OF MUSIC.

II.

In that dread instant when Eternity
Was by the Angel's sword asunder riven,
There sounded from the starry deep a cry
That shook the constellated poles of heaven:

"Elohim! Elohim! what hast thou done,
Whose sword hath hewn Eternity in twain?
One part of it is now the Past, and one
The Future (phantoms both, exempt from pain
By lifeless unreality alone!)
And the pang'd Present, like an open wound,
Between them gapes, lest aught should close again
What thou hast cloven."

To this poignant sound
The Seraph, leaning on his sword down-slanted,
Listen'd, and in compassion or disdain
Smiled gravely, as he murmur'd "It is well.
The Reign of Time begins, man's prayer is granted."

Then loud he call'd to the Abyss of Hell,
"Stunn'd rebels, rouse your swooning hosts, and rise,
Tho' thunder-smitten, from the Penal Pit!
Time's ravageable realm wide open lies
For your invasion, and the spoils of it
To you no more Eternity denies.
Find in its painful fields your pasture fit,
Be every pulse of consciousness your prey,
And chase the panting moment as it flies!"
Hell to the invocation answer'd "Yea!"
And, pour'd in surge on surge of flame-pulsed cries,
The fervid rush of her Infernal Powers

Sounded like roaring fire, tho' sightless they
As midnight storms.

"Eternity is dead!
And Time, the quivering corpse of it, is ours!
And from Eternity's death-wound," they said,
"Fast, fast, the life-drops fall—days, minutes, hours,
Drop after drop, with world on world, away—
Into the final nothingness at last!
To-day sinks swooning into yesterday,
The future disappears into the past.
Eternity lies lost in what hath been
And is no more, or in what is not yet;
For all the rest is but a sigh between
A hovering fear and a forlorn regret.
And every moment but begins in vain
A world that is with every moment ended;
For broken is Eternity in twain,
And never shall Eternity be mended."

This sullen pœan waked, where'er it went
Around the rolling world, responsive sounds
Of wrath and pain ; as if all passions pent
In some titanic soul had burst the bounds
Of individuality, and blent
Their personal essence with the mindless might
Of universal forces. First, there came
Ominous suspirations, tremours slight
Of sleepy terror, from the shuddering pores
And joints and sockets of earth's giant frame ;
Anon, Behemoth, bellowing, with fierce roars
Shook all his chains. The mountains, rack'd and pang'd
By earthquake, thunder'd from their fiery cores ;
From smitten crag to crag the cataracts clang'd ;
The sharp rain hiss'd ; the ocean howl'd ; the shores
Shriek'd ; and the woods tumultuously twang'd
Their wailing harps. But what was felt and heard

Thro' all that uproar's dissonant hurricane
Was not the inarticulate noise alone
Of winds and waves and woods and mountains stirr'd
To screaming storm; there was a mystic strain
Of spiritual agony, a tone
Of conscious torment, mingled with the train
Of those unconscious sounds,—the personal moan
Of some invisible being's passionate pain.

Wild as the roar of an uprooted world
Wrench'd from its orbit, round the Dream of Man
This swarm of demon discords roll'd and swirl'd.
Thro' Adam's slumber, as it hurtled by,
Its sounds were scatter'd; and his dream began
Dimly to shape beneath his sleep-shut eye
Weird wavering images that were, or seem'd,
The echoes of those sounds made visible.
So that to Adam's soul the dream he dream'd

Was even as if on some vast curtain fell
Troops of stupendous shadows in the glare
Shed o'er it from a mighty furnace, lit
Behind the back of one who, to his chair
Fast chain'd, with wistful eyes peruses it,
Wondering what sort of unseen beings are those
Whose phantoms thro' the glory come and go:
For of them nothing more the watcher knows
Than the huge shadows they, in passing, throw
Athwart the lurid curtain; nor whence flows
The light those shadows darken, doth he know.*

Still smiled the Seraph. Slow, in circuit wide,
Around the sphere of Adam's dream he drew
The solemn splendours of his sword, and cried
"Thus far, no farther!" The Infernal Crew
In vain to storm that aëry circle tried,

* Plato.—*Republic.* Book vii.

And round it hoarse their grovelling hubbub grew,
Reluctantly beginning to subside
In sullen howls and stifled bellowings.

Then cried the Angel, "Waken, also, you
That slumber in the silence of sweet things,
Voices of Consolation! and pursue
From hour to hour with your fond welcomings
That promise fair the fleeting hours renew!
Come hither from the hidden heavens that are
Your homes on earth! Come, with the south winds, hither
From rosy kingdoms of the Vesper Star!
Come, with the sunrise, from the golden ether!
Come with the cushat's goodnight coo, from bowers
Bathed in the tender dews of eventide,
Or with the hymn that to the matin hours
The laverock sings in glory unespied!

Ripple light music of the restless breeze
Thro' murmurous haunts of sylvan oracles,
And loose the secrets lisp'd by summer seas
Into the husht pink ears of blushing shells!
Come, with remember'd sounds of warbling stream,
And whispering bough, from woodland cloisters! Come,
Consolers! Enter here, and let the Dream
That Man is dreaming be henceforth your home!"

To this appeal the answer linger'd long,
And not a sound upon the darkness stirr'd
Save the faint moanings of the Demon Throng.
But a strange note, not theirs, at length was heard,
A single timorous note of distant song,
Like the first chirrup of a callow bird.
Then, one by one, from here and there, arose
Clear in the far-off stillness of the night

(As from the bosom of the twilight grows
Star after star) a multitude of light
But thrilling tones, a choral harmony
Of silvery voices in symphonious scale;
Whose heavenward anthem peal'd from sky to sky,
As "Hail!" they sang, "Benignant Elohim, hail!
The living soul of dead Eternity
Thy rescuing sword hath free'd. From its dark prison
Released at last, on pinions glorious
Behold, that radiant Spirit is now arisen!
And hark, how sweet the song it sings to us!
How sweet the song, how fair the face! for fled
The hovering frown erewhile its aspect wore,
And lo, the frigid features of the dead
Are flusht with spiritual life! No more
Those eyes are cold, no more those lips are dumb,
And 'Fear no more,' they sing, 'to gaze on me!
Ye call'd me Fate when I was frozen numb

In the cold silence of Eternity,
And then ye fear'd me: but my living home
Henceforth is in the hearts of all who live.
Fear me no more, then, for to you I come
With an eternal gift that shall survive
Fate's despot rule o'er Time's brief horoscope:
Eternity is still the gift I give
To all who trust me, and my name is Hope.'"

And "Ave! ave!" sang the Voices. "Thee
We welcome, holy Hope, that from afar
Dost bring the promise of sweet things to be,
Forever sweeter than all things that are!
Born flying, thy fair flight thou canst not stop,
But into the sad hearts it leaves behind
Thou dost, in passing, from thy pinions drop
One spotless plume that, cherisht, keeps in mind
The dear remembrance of its passage. We,

"What can we give thee in return for this?
Take all their best, to save them, take with thee
Our sweetest joys, our holiest hours; whose bliss,
To thy far kingdom borne away, shall be
Better and brighter, holier still, and higher!
Take also, Spirit of Eternity,
What Time made ours, to make it thine—Desire!"

Closer and clearer the sweet Voices grew,
Borne floating on their own song's rhythmic stream,
Flutter'd round Adam's slumber, downward flew,
And settled in the bosom of his dream.
"Rest there, Consolers!" the Archangel said,
"And you, Disturbers, strive as you have striven,
And thou—dream on, poor Dreamer!"

Then he spread
His spacious pinions, and return'd to heaven.

Out of the depths of Adam's dream, and clear
All round it, those Consoling Voices pour'd
Pure strains of silver sound, that fill'd the sphere
Traced by the circuit of the Angel's sword.
The Demon Powers, resentful, roused again
Their turbulent cohorts to the overthrow
Of this melodious bulwark, but in vain ;
For there Hell's surges broke, and hoarse below
Roll'd in tumultuary undertones
Their weltering waves of passion and of pain,
Goaded and groaning, as the smit sea groans
When the storm's lash is on its livid mane.

Those sounds were heard in Heaven ; and, down the light
Of all the listening stars, celestial streams
Of song flow'd, mingling with the troubled flight
Of their fierce tones—as, while the torrent screams,

The calm moon, shining thro' a cloudless night,
Belts his tost bosom with her tranquil beams.

And all these Voices, with the sounds that were
Their instrumental slaves,—the Voices sweet
Of Man's Consolers, hymning praise and prayer,
The Voices of the Passions of the Pit,
Earth's dread disturbers, clarions of despair,
And the pure Voices of the Stars—contending
With one another, pour'd the importunate tide
Of their sonorous strife, in strains ascending
Beyond the visible spheres, to where it sigh'd
About the elemental boundary wall
Which never, to the other unseen side,
The swarming senses that man's soul enthral
May overpass. For shrouded there, serene
And irresponsive to the strife of all
The worlds of passion and of sense—unseen,

Unheard—He dwells, Who is, and wills, and knows.
And there, its clamour calm'd, its vehement play
Of contradictions quench'd in the repose
Of a sublime accord whose spacious sway
Husht its wild course to an harmonious close,
Slowly the sounding tumult died away.

So, when all storms are spent, and Ocean's sleep
Leviathan's loud voice invades no more,
The wearied winds into the silent deep
Drop the last echoes of his dying roar,
And fold their heavy wings, and faintly creep
To rest on some lone island's desert shore;
Where the huge billows in low waves subside,
And the low waves in rippling shallows cease,
While the lull'd halcyon on the slumbrous tide
Broods, and the breathing stillness whispers "Peace!"

* * * * * *

When Adam waked, the sounds that in his dream
Dream-woven forms had worn still haunted him.
Not only to have heard them did he seem,
But even to have seen them, in a dim
Indefinite world that of life's earthly scheme
The phantom protoplast appear'd. For there
Some bliss beyond possession was the prize
Relentless wrestlers strove to seize or share;
And o'er a battle-field of boundless size
Hope and Desire with Terror and Despair,
And Love and Faith with Hate and Doubt, contended;
Importunately rolling to and fro,
In restless contradiction never ended,
A Yes reverberated by a No.
Infinite longing, infinite resistance,
Infinite turmoil! gaining now, now losing,
And then again with passionate persistance
Speeding the clamorous chase thro' vast, confusing,

Inextricable mazes; but still ever,
Beyond the strife of discords and the cry
Of conflict, with inveterate endeavour,
Tending towards a far off harmony.

And MUSIC was the name the dreamer gavê
To that dream-world's mysterious sounds. In vain,
However, for long years did Adam crave
To hear, in *this* world, *that* world's sounds again.
And everywhere on earth he sought to find
Or fashion images that might express
The echoes of them lingering in his mind,
But nought resembled their mysteriousness.

His sons grew up. Memorial words they wrote
On sun-dried river-reeds in cunning rhymes,
Or graved them on the rocks, that men might note
Who went before them in the after times.

He praised their scripture, but he shook his head.
"The higher language still lies out of reach,
And sweet your rhymes, my sons; but, ah!" he said
"They are not music, only sweeter speech."
His sons took clay, and kneaded it with skill
Into the images of beasts, and men,
And gods. But "Music," Adam murmur'd still
"In form alone I find not." Colour then
To form they added—colour squeezed and ground
From herbs and earths—and pictures rich they wrought
Of man, his doings, and the world around.
But not in these was found what Adam sought.
"Things seen and known," he said, "they mimic well,
But all things known and seen are, I surmise,
Themselves but pictures of invisible,
Or echoes of unheard, infinities.
Definite are words, forms, and colours, each:
Music alone is infinite."

And none
Of Adam's offspring understood that speech,
Save Jubal only. Jubal was the son
Of Lamech, whose progenitor was Cain.
His life's ancestral consciousness of death
Stretch'd each sensation to a finer strain;
Into his listening ear earth's lightest breath
An infinite mystery breath'd; in every sound
That mystery sent a message to his soul;
Nor could he rest till definite means he found
Its messengers to summon and control.
And what he sought by wistful ways unnumber'd,
Searching, at last he found in things where long
Had Music on the breast of Silence slumber'd,
Waiting his summons to awake and throng
The bronzen tubes he wrought with stops and vents,
Or shells with silver lute-strings overlaid.

When Jubal play'd upon these instruments
A visionary transport, as he play'd,
Rose in each listener and reveal'd to him
The beauty and the bliss of Paradise,
The songs and splendours of the Seraphim.

Albeit these transports from a mere device
Of wind-blown pipes in order ranged arose,
Or strings that, smitten, render'd response sharp.

And Jubal was the father of all those
Whose hand is on the organ and the harp.

III.

THE LEGEND OF LOVE.

III.

Eve had heard all, but nothing had she seen:
For, ere the Archangel's sword was drawn, dividing
The oneness of Eternity, between
The gates of Eden fraudulently gliding,
Athwart the wilderness the Snake slid near.
And, where beneath the weight of one day's ill
Fallen she lay, into the woman's ear
He whisper'd, "Look not! utter not! lie still!"
Eve heard, and at his bidding still she lay,
Nor look'd, nor utter'd.
In the woman's eyes
Thus linger'd a reflection of what they

Last look'd on ere she closed them—Paradise.
For all the Archangel's weapon shore away
From Man's perception was what lay before
The gaze of Adam when that sword's sharp ray
(Rending his cloven consciousness in twain)
Parted the Present from the Past. But o'er
The loveliness that in their looks had lain
When last on Eden from afar she gazed,
The lids of Eve were fallen ere (for bane
Or blessing) Adam's granted prayer erased
For ever from the records of his brain
Each memory of Paradise.

And there,
In Eve's shut eyes whate'er on earth is left
Of Eden—faint reflections of it, fair
Fallacious phantoms of a bliss bereft
Of all reality—escaped the stroke

That from remembrance all the rest dispell'd.
So Adam in Eve's eyes, when he awoke,
Vague semblances of Paradise beheld;
And that lost gleam of Eden's light that still
Dreamlike and dim in his own being dwelt
Responded to them with a mystic thrill,
Tho' Adam understood not what he felt.

And still Eve's daughters in their looks retain
Those mirror'd mockeries their mother's eyes
Bequeath'd them, tho' the Paradise they feign
Is now a long-forbidden Paradise.
Reveal'd in Woman's gaze Man seems to see
The wisht-for Eden he hath lost. He deems
That Eden still in Woman's self must be,
And he would fain re-enter it. His dreams
Are kindled, by the mystic light that lies
In these sweet looks, to fervid wishfulness;

And, missing what he ne'er hath known, he sighs
For what, itself, is but a sigh—the bliss
Which there he seeks, and there is lost again.

No more, O nevermore, those steps of his,
Whose progress is but a progressive pain,
The Paradise they seek may reach and rove!
Yet still the search is sweet, albeit in vain;
It lasts for ever, and men call it LOVE.

IV.

THE LEGEND OF THE IDEAL.

IV.

When, at the archangelic bidding (blest
With one brief vision of his happy past
In all the lost delights of Eden drest)
Adam on Paradise had look'd his last,
There every form of loveliness beloved
Whose beauty, dear to his adoring eye,
Had breathed delight thro' all the haunts of yore,
And clothed in gladness all the days gone by,
The man beheld, save one.

For Eve no more
Among the abandon'd bowers of Eden moved.
Eden was Eveless.

Thus, Man's memory
Of Woman as in Paradise she was
The archangelic sword had not transfixt.
This memory made in Adam's mind, alas,
A visionary image, vaguely mixt
With that stray glimpse of Eden's light that fell
Into his slumber, and became a dream,
The dream of Adam's life. And there, too well
Remember'd, with her beauty's phantom gleam
Mocking him, moved the Eve of Paradise;
Immeasurably fairer than the Eve
That walk'd by Adam's side with sullen sighs
And faded cheek—condemn'd, like him, to grieve
And to grow old; like him, to brave the bleakness
Of life's long desert; and, with him, to share
The weight of many a burden, borne in meekness
Or borne in bitterness, still hard to bear;

An earthly woman, with a woman's weakness,
A woman's faults.
That phantom, faultless fair,
(The unforgotten Eve of Paradise,
Beautiful as he first beheld her there,
Ere any tear had dimm'd her glorious eyes)
Long after Paradise itself had been
By him forgotten, haunted Adam's gaze.
And Adam made comparison between
The faithful partner of his faultful days,
Who stray'd, and sinn'd, and suffer'd by his side,
And that imagined woman. With a sigh,
Her unattainable beauty, when he died,
Adam bequeath'd to his posterity,
Who call'd it THE IDEAL.
And Mankind
Still cherish it, and still it cheats them all.
For, with the Ideal Woman in his mind,

Fair as she was in Eden ere the Fall,
Still each doth discontentedly compare
The sad associate of his earthly lot;
And still the Earthly Woman seems less fair
Than her ideal image unforgot.

* * * * *

And Adam slept and dream'd and waked again
From day to day, from age to age. Apace
Time trod his self-repeating path. To Men
Man grew, and Adam became Adam's Race.

The Race of Adam, by his granted prayer
Born as it was oblivious of life's source,
Went onward, lighted only here and there
And now and then, along its eyeless course,
By visionary flashes brief and rare
Of unexplain'd remembrance, that appear'd

Vague prescience. For the goal whereto Man goes
Is his recover'd starting-point—tho', rear'd
In a profound forgetfulness, he knows
No longer whence or whither winds the track
His steps have enter'd, and so lives like those
Who, dreaming, dream not that sleep leads at last
To waking, that to wake is to come back,
And that what seems the Future is the Past.

But round that Ghost of Human Loveliness
Which over Human Life's unlovely way
Hover'd afar, evading the caress
It still invoked, the reminiscent ray
Of Eden's glory (lost in Adam's Dream
And mingled with his soul) so shone and glow'd,
That on Man's spirit the reflected gleam
Of its divine effulgence oft bestow'd
A supersensuous potency of sight,

Piercing, without an effort of his will,
The Universal Veil that dims the light
Of Universal Truth. A teeming thrill
Of recognition thro' his senses ran
From things that power reveal'd to him: and he
To Nature cried, "Behold thy missing plan!
For is not this what thou hast tried to be?"
Whereto, from all her conscious deeps, to Man
Nature responded, "Yes!"
In toil and pain
At other times, by other ways, Man's wits
Search after knowledge, but can ne'er attain
The flying point that on before him flits.
For he is as a voyager in vain
Sailing towards horizons that recede
From phantom frontier lines of sky and main,
With furtive motion measured by the speed
Of their pursuer. But wherever shines

That sudden ray of reminiscence rare,
There, and there only, the convergent lines
Of the orb'd Universe shut fast, and there
Man's knowledge rests, untravell'd, at the goal.
For, be it ne'er so trivial, ne'er so mean,
The one becomes the All, the part the Whole,
When, thro' them both, what each conceal'd is seen.

And age by age, man after man essaying
To fix for endless worship and delight,
In shrines of permanence for ever staying,
These gleams of truth for ever taking flight,
Men fashion'd forth new forms of Time and Space,
Idealising both. The work they wrought
In Space was Beauty, and in Time 'twas Grace.
These two ideals everywhere they sought;
But the ideal human form and face
Were still the fairest, still the loveliest.

And still thro' human action, human thought,
And most of all thro' human love, men's quest
With fondest fervour roams to find the sphere
Of that Ideal World wherein the part
Includes the Whole, the one the All. For there
Men are to Man transform'd, and life to Art.

SECOND SERIES.

MAN AND BEAST.

"Thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field."

PSALM viii.

I.

THE LEGEND OF THE ELEPHANT.

I.

ONE day when Adam, as he dug the ground,
Lifted his forehead to wipe off the sweat
That dript upon his labour, gazing round
He saw (and at that sight his fear was great)
A mountain moving toward him.

Sore afraid,
Adam fell prostrate and began to pray.
For every time that Adam fear'd he pray'd,
And every thing he fear'd he worshipt. Grey
And great, this formidable mountain made

Gravely along the plain its gradual way,
Till over Adam hover'd its huge shade.
Then, in a language lost for ever and aye,
The Mountain to the Man, reproachful, said—
"Dost thou not know me, Adam?"

"Mountain, nay,"
The Man replied, "nor did I ever see
A mountain move, as thou dost. Yesterday
I met a mountain, but 'twas unlike thee,
Far larger, and it lay athwart my track,
Nor moved altho' I bent to it my knee,
So on I pass'd over the mountain's back.
Was that a sin? So many sins there be!
And art thou come to punish it, alack,
By marching on mine own back over me?"

"Adam," the Mountain answer'd him, "arise!

"Not at my feet thy place is. Whence this dread?
Alas, when we were still in Paradise
Fast friends were we." But Adam hung his head,
And mutter'd, "Friends? I know not what that is.
Why dost thou persecute me, and pursue?
Is Paradise a wilderness like this?
I know it not, and thee I never knew."
"Well didst thou know me once, when we were there,"
The Mountain answer'd, "nor canst thou deny
'Twas thou who gavest me the name I bear."
But Adam, crouching, cried, "It was not I!
I never gave thee anything at all.
What wouldst thou? worship? sacrifice? roots? grain?
Take, and begone! Mountain, my store is small."

And sullenly the savage turn'd again
To the hard labour of his daily lot.

By this the pitying Elephant perceived
That Adam in the desert had forgot
His happier birthplace. The good beast was grieved;
And "Those," he said, "whom thou rememb'rest not
Remember thee. We could not live bereaved
Of thy loved presence, and from end to end
Of Eden sought thee. When thou didst not come
We mourn'd thee, missing our great human friend,
And wondering what withheld him from his home.
I think the fervour of our fond distress
Melted the battlements of Paradise.
They fell, and forth into the wilderness
We came to find thee. For who else is wise
As thou art? and we hold thee great above
Our greatest. Why hast thou forsaken us
For this drear desert? Was not Eden best?
Unsweet the region thou hast chosen thus!
Yet less forlorn than loss of human love

Hath left the bowers by love in Eden blest.
So where thou dwellest shall our dwelling be,
Since joy from Eden went when thou wert gone,
And where thou goest we will go with thee.
To tell thee this the others sent me on."

Adam look'd up alarm'd, and trembling cried,
"What others? Then I am indeed undone!
More Elephants like thee?" The beast replied,
"Alas, hast thou forgotten everyone
Of thine old followers, the blithe beasts that were
Thy folk in Paradise? which for thy sake
We have abandon'd, and are come to share
Thy labour, and near thine our lodging make.
For Man completes us all, whate'er we be,
And to his service faithfully we pledge
Our several forces. Leaves unto the tree
They garment, feathers to the wing they fledge,

Wings to the bird they bear, and hands to thee,
Belong not more than we for Man were made.
So if thou sufferest we will suffer too,
And if thou toilest we thy toil will aid,
And we will be thy loving servants true,
And thou shalt be our master."

Adam said
Nothing. A mist that, melting, turn'd to dew
Was in his eyes. He could not speak a word.
That wretched savage grovelling in the dust;
Whose rebel will had disobey'd the Lord,
Whose coward heart had lost both love and trust,
Whose dull despair had from his blinded eye
Effaced the Past, and to the Present left
Nothing but degradation utterly
Of nobler reminiscences bereft,
What could he answer?

Nothing did he say ;
But sank down silent on the desert earth,
And, sinking, flung the rough-hewn flint away,
Wherewith he had been digging its hard dearth.
Then closer to the gentle beast he crept,
And hid his face between his hands, and wept.

II.

THE LEGEND OF THE ASS.

II.

THE Elephant then lifted up on high
His waving trunk, and trumpeted a clear
Sonorous summons. With responsive cry
To that glad signal, all the beasts drew near,
And stood round Adam who was weeping still.
Not one faint word of welcome did he say;
But all to comfort him employ'd their skill,
And each beast gave him some good gift. For they,
When forth from Paradise they went to find
Its unforgotten lord, had brought away

As many of the treasures left behind
By Man as each could carry.

So that day
(Thanks to the beasts, who had preserved them) he
Some precious fragments of himself at length
Recover'd, and became in some degree
Human again. Proud consciousness of strength
The Lion gave him. Honesty of heart
The Dog. A vigilance that's never dull
The Lynx bestow'd. The Beaver brought him art,
The Eagle aspiration. Tenderness
The Dove contributed, the Elephant
Benign sagacity, the Fox address.
He gain'd a sturdy courage from the Bull:
And, all combining to supply Man's want,
Each beast and bird in tribute bountiful,
Gave Adam something he had lack'd before.

He took whate'er they gave him, and began,
As gift by gift he gather'd up the store,
Slowly to feel himself once more a man.

One beast there was who let the others pass,
Each with his tributary offering,
Before him, patiently. It was the Ass.
And when his turn came some good gift to bring,
He seem'd to look for something in the grass,
But did not offer Adam anything.

Caressingly, like an importunate child,
Adam approach'd the Ass, whose shaggy head
He fondled. "Gentle are thy looks and mild,
Hast thou not brought me any gift?" he said.
The Ass replied, "My gift is all unfit
To offer thee." Adam was vext, and frown'd.
The Ass resumed "I am ashamed of it,

Although in Paradise this gift I found.
No other beast to take it had a mind,
And if I had not pick'd it from the ground
I think it would have there been left behind."

The Man heard this not wholly without shame;
But still he answer'd from a greedy heart,
"No matter! give it to me, all the same."

Then said the Ass, "If of a mind thou art
To share with me mine all, I do but claim
To keep a portion of it. Choose thy part"
And in two parts he portion'd it. But those
Two parts appear'd unequal. With the zest
Of selfishness, Man, naturally, chose
The biggest, thinking it must be the best.

But Adam, as his wont it was, chose wrong

For what the Ass (with a prophetic sense
Perchance of his own need of it ere long)
Had saved from Eden was BENEVOLENCE.
When thus partition'd between Man and Beast,
Benevolence its primal beauty lost;
And Adam's portion proved to be the least
Benignant, tho' he fancied it the most.
This fraction of Benevolence began,
When mingled with Man's character, alas,
To be Stupidity; and, scorn'd by Man,
'Tis Patience that has rested with the Ass.

III.

THE LEGEND OF THE DEAD LAMBS.

III.

DEATH, tho' already in the world, as yet
Had only tried his timorous tooth to whet
On grass and leaves. But he began to grow
Greedier, greater, and resolved to know
The taste of stronger food than such light fare.
To feed on human flesh he did not dare,
Till many a meaner meal had slowly given
The young destroyer strength to vanquish even
His restless rival in destruction, Man.
Meanwhile, on lesser victims he began
To test his power: and in a cold Spring night

Two weanling Lambs first perish'd from his bite.
The bleatings of their dam at break of day
Drew to the spot where her dead Lambkins lay
The other beasts. They, understanding not,
A wistful silence round that fatal spot
Stood eyeing the dead Lambs with looks forlorn.

Adam, who was upon the march that morn,
Missing his bodyguard, turn'd back to see
What they were doing; and there also he
Saw the two frozen Lambkins lying dead,
But understood not. At the last he said,
"Since the Lambs cannot move, methinks 'twere best
That I should carry them."

So on his breast
He laid their little bodies, and again
Set forward, follow'd o'er the frosty plain

By his bewilder'd flocks. And in dismay
They held their peace. That was a silent day.
At night he laid the dead Lambs on the grass.
That night still colder than the other was,
And when the morning broke there were two more
Dead Lambs to carry. Adam took the four,
And in his arms he bore them, no great way,
Till eventide. That was a sorrowful day.

But, ere the next, two other Lambkins died,
Frost-bitten in the dark. Then Adam tried
To carry them, all six. But the poor Sheep
Said, "Nay, we thank thee, Adam. Let them sleep!
Thou canst not carry them. 'Tis all in vain.
We fear our Lambkins will not wake again.
And, if they wake, they could not walk—for see,
Their little legs are stiffen'd. Let them be!"

So Adam left the Lambs. And all the Herd
Follow'd him sorrowing, and not a word
Was spoken. Never until then had they
Their own forsaken. That was the worst day.

Eve said to Adam, as they went along,
"Adam, last night the cold was bitter strong.
Warm fleeces to keep out the freezing wind
Have those six Lambkins thou hast left behind;
But they will never need them any more.
Go, fetch them here! and I will make, before
This day be done, stout garments for us both,
Lest we, too, wake no more." Said Adam, loth
To do her bidding, "Why dost thou suppose
Our Lambs will nevermore have need of those
Warm fleeces? They are sleeping." But Eve said,
"They are not sleeping, Adam. They are dead."
"Dead? What is that?" "I know not. But I know

That they no more can feel the north wind blow,
Nor the sun burn. They cannot hear the bleat
Of their own mothers, cannot suffer heat
Or cold, or thirst or hunger, weariness
Or want, again." "How dost thou know all this?"
Ask'd Adam. And Eve whisper'd in his ear,
"The Serpent told me." "Is the Serpent here?
If here he be, why hath he," Adam cried,
"No good gift brought me?" Adam's wife replied,
"The best of gifts, if rightly understood,
He brings thee, and that gift is counsel good.
The Serpent is a prudent beast; and right!
For we were miserably cold last night,
And may to-night be colder; and hard by
Those dead Lambs in their woolly fleeces lie,
Yet need them not as we do. They are dead.
Go, fetch them hither!"

Adam shook his head,

But went.

Next morning, to the beasts' surprise,

Adam and Eve appear'd before their eyes

In woollen fleeces warmly garmented.

And all the beasts to one another said,

"How wonderful is Man, who can make wool

As good as Sheep's wool, and more beautiful!"

Only the Fox, who snift and grinn'd, had guess'd

Man's unacknowledged theft: and to the rest

He sneer'd, "How wonderful is Woman's whim!

See, Adam's wife hath made a sheep of him!"

IV.

THE LEGEND OF EVE'S JEWELS.

IV.

FROM that day forth Eve eyed with tenderness
The Serpent, to whose craft she owed her dress.
But "More," he whisper'd in her ear one day,
"Thou still mayst owe me, if it please thee. Say,
Wouldst thou be fair?"

The woman smiled, "Behold me!
Am I not fair already?" "Who hath told thee
That thou art fair?" the Serpent ask'd. Again
Eve smiled, and answer'd, "Adam." "Ah, but
when?"

He ask'd. And, this time sighing as she smiled,
She said, "Before the birth of our first child."
"I thought so," said the Serpent. "Long ago!"
Eve's eyes grew tearful. She replied, "I know
It was but yesterday I chanced to trace
Reflected in a mountain pool the face
That he had praised; and I was satisfied
That certainly, unless the water lied,
Adam was right." "*Was* right," the Serpent said,
"So was last summer sweet." "Doth beauty fade?"
Eve murmur'd. "Ay, with youth," said he. "And thou
Canst make me young again?" "Not that. But how,
When young no more, to make thee fair again
I know a way." "What way?" said Eve. "Explain!"
"It is," he answer'd, "by adorning thee."
"And what wouldst thou adorn me with?" said she.
"Myself!" he whisper'd.

Then the Serpent roll'd
His ruby-colour'd rings and coils of gold
Around the form of Eve : her neck enlaced,
And was a necklace ; girt her pliant waist,
And was a girdle ; with elastic bound
Above her knee his wistful clasp enwound,
And was a garter ; with repeated twist
Of twinkling chain entwined her tender wrist,
And was a bracelet. Last of all, her brow
He crown'd, and cried, " Man's Queen, I hail thee now ! "

Eve blusht. The sense of some new sexual power
Unknown to all her being till that hour,
Within it kindled a superb surprise.
Back, with half-open'd lips and half-shut eyes,
She lean'd to its rich load her jewell'd head.

And at her ear again the Serpent said,

"By the bright blaze of thine adornment, see
What in the years to come thy sex shall be!
Mere female animal, much weaker than
The male its master, not the Queen of Man,
Scarce even his mate, that sex was born; but more
Than it was born shall it become. Such store
Doth in it lurk of secret subtilty,
Such seed of complex life, as by-and-by
Shall grow into full Woman; and, when grown,
The Woman shall avenge, tho' she disown,
The Female, her forgotten ancestress.
Mother of both, my glittering caress
Now wakes beneath thy bosom's kindled snow
Whole worlds of Womanhood in embryo!
A penal law controls Man's fallen state.
It's name is Progress: and, to stimulate
That progress to its destin'd goal, Decay,
Woman, with growing power, shall all the way

Its course accompany—from happiness
And ignorance to knowledge and distress;
From careless impulse to contrived device;
From spontaneity to artifice;
From simple to sophisticated life;
From faith to doubt, and from repose to strife.
Whilst, still as Progress doth its prey pursue,
The weaker shall the stronger-born subdue,
Man subjugating first those monsters grim
Whose strength is more than his; then, Woman him:
Tho' he born weaker than most beasts, and she
Born weaker even that man's own weakness, be.
So shall the Feminine Force that set him on
Still keep him going till his course be done.
Far hath he yet to travel his long way,
But thou hast started him. And on the day
He lost that Paradise he ne'er had won,
Here was his progress, thanks to thee, begun.

That was Man's first step forward. I perceive
He (thanks again to thee) is on the eve
Of yet another. Good advice to him
Thou gavest, whence he got his winter trim,
So warm and stout. But at that fleecy coat
The beasts, his unprogressive friends, I note,
Begin to look suspiciously askance.
And thence do I predict his next advance.
'Twixt Man and Beast the inevitable strife
Must needs enforce 'twixt Man and Man a life
More artificial. And therefrom shall rise
The Future Woman; form'd to civilize,
Corrupt, and ruin, raise, and overthrow
Cycles of social types that all shall owe
To her creative and destructive sway
Their beauty's blossom, and their strength's decay.
Behold, then, in thyself the primal source
Of Human Progress, and its latest force!

For, since from thee shall thy fair daughters, Eve,
A subtler sex than all thy sons receive,
Their beauty shall complete what thine began,
Thou crown'd Queen Mother of the Queens of Man!"

43801

V.

THE LEGEND OF FABLE.

V.

With many a plume and tuft of brilliant dye,
And blushing berries twined in belt and tress,
Eve on her clothing had begun to try
What ornament could add to usefulness
From day to day. But, as the days went by,
The more she prized her borrow'd charms, the less
She loved their owners who, approving not
Those pilfer'd splendours, with resentful eye
Beheld them all. For out the secret got,
How from the bodies of the dead were torn
The garments Eve and Adam gloried in:

And to the beasts, who were as they were born,
It seem'd a scandal and a sort of sin
That their own wool and fur should thus be worn
By limbs not theirs. "Let each defend his skin!"
They said to one another.
In those days
There was a little animal Eve yet
Loved passing well; for it had pleasant ways,
Was smooth, and soft, and sleek, and seem'd to set
A grateful store on her capricious praise.
Curl'd in her lap 'twould nestle without fear,
And let her stroke its back and bosom white,
Until to Eve this beast became so dear
That in its confidence she took delight.
But, when the Herd discover'd that her dress
Was stolen from their plunder'd kith and kin,
Eve's little favourite fear'd each fresh caress
Her hand bestow'd on it, and felt within

Its frighten'd heart a sharp mistrustfulness,
For "If she took a fancy to my skin?"
The creature mused. And ever from that date
Its thoughts and looks were all alert to find
Some means whereby it might escape the fate
Whose horrid prospect hover'd vague behind
Eve's fondling fingers. Once, when peering round,
Inquisitively careful to explore
All nooks and corners till such means were found,
It spied a heap of fish-bones on the floor.
Then, from Eve's lap down-sliding to the ground,
It roll'd itself among them o'er and o'er
Till it became a Porcupine. And "How
To guard my skin," it chuckled, "nevermore
Need I henceforth take any pains, for now
My skin it is that will henceforth guard me!"

So in this unapproachable condition

Secure it lived: for its security
Was even the same as Man's was—Arm'd Suspicion.

Suspicion everywhere! No peace could be
On earth henceforth. To war suspicion led.
Long ages is it since that war began,
And seas of blood have been on both sides shed,
Yet still it lasts. In servitude to Man
Some captived beasts survive. The Dog is one.
But, just because the Dog to Man is true,
From his approach his former comrades run,
Deeming him traitor to their cause. Some few
(The fiercest and the savagest alone)
An intermittent and unequal strife
Around their dens in desert lands pursue,
And they and Man are enemies for life.
Nor they and Man alone: for, confidence
Once gone, the beasts upon each other prey'd

Like beasts, without the plausible pretence
Of good intentions by Man's nature made
For his bad doings in the grim campaign
'Twixt him and them. This so revolted her,
That Justice from the world-wide battle-plain
Fled blushing. Pity's flight was tardier:
But, after lingering long in vain appeal
From heart to heart, she follow'd Justice too,
Where only bloodstains left behind reveal
The paths whereby she fled from mortal view.

And they, the gentle Beasts of Paradise
That were Man's once familiar intimates,
Far from the menace of his murderous eyes
Whither, O whither are they gone? The gates
Of Paradise are shut for ever, and there
No refuge for Man's victims, nor for him,
Remains on earth. But, from the bowers that were

With Eden lost, the pitying Seraphim
Sow'd in the waste one seed. A forest fair
Sprang from it—giant trees of lusty limb,
Long vaults of bloom and verdure never bare,
Where forms, half-bird half-blossom, flash and swim
From bough to bough, and, husht in windless air,
Soft shadows flutter from the whisperous wings
Of half-awaken'd dreams; while all things there
Seem slowly turning into other things,
As, down the bowery hollows to the brim
Of immemorial seas, melodious springs
From undiscoverable sources bear
Primeval secrets.

Deep into the dim
But deathless shelter of that blest repair
Those gentle beasts departed, and became
Forthwith imperishably fabulous.

For History, that doth so loud proclaim
And with such curiosity discuss
Man's perishable life and course unstable,
Of them and theirs knows nothing, and the name
Of their unfading Forest Home is Fable.

Far off, and ever farther off from us,
That Forest and the dwellers in it seem,
As far and farther on we travel fast,
And more and more like a remember'd dream
Becomes the glimmering wonder of the Past.
But, o'er a wingèd and four-fooèted folk
Whose unsophisticated nature yields
Spontaneous service to her even yoke,
There Justice reigns revered; there Pity shields
An else defenceless flock; and there do they
Their joint tribunal hold, where every cause
That in this human world hath gone astray,

And honest trial miss'd, by lovelier laws
Than ours is welcomed to impartial test,
All cases pleaded, be they what they may,
All rights establish'd, and all wrongs redress'd.
How far away it seems, how far away!

Yet one step only from the trodden track
That to its daily pilgrims, every one,
Appears to be the very zodiac
The universe itself is travelling on,
Let any man but turn aside, and lo!
Around whatever path he chance to pace
With steps unconscious of the way they go
Far-reaching Fable's million-branch'd embrace
Doth its unfathomable influence throw.

To him who tells these tales such chance befell
Once on a time: and in that Forest old

('Tho' how he enter'd it he cannot tell)
With one whose face he may no more behold
Or there or here, he was beguiled to dwell
Full many a month. But few of his own kind,
Among the folk who there safe dwelling have,
To greet him or to guide him did he find.
Of these, the wisest was a Phrygian slave,
The holiest Assisi's tender Saint.
Phœdrus upon the borders of the land
Sat listening; and to him came echoes faint
From voices far within. His careful hand
On tablets smooth deliberately wrote
In unimpulsive verse, correctly plann'd,
All that thus reach'd him from a source remote.
But there, without restraint, from place to place
And led by none, tho' follow'd by a band
Of Loves and Graces whose light steps kept pace
With his inimitably varied lay,

Free-footed went the witty Fabulist
Of social France. And there our English Gay,
Methodically playful, neither miss'd
Nor much advanced his unadventurous way.

Howbeit along that dim and vast domain
From the discourse of any one of these
Scant guidance did its last explorer gain.
There were so many more instructors! Trees,
Rocks, rivers, rainbows, clouds, dews, wind, and rain,
No less than birds and beasts, that live at ease
An unmolested life by hill and plain
Throughout its vocal realms (where all that is
Is all alive) have tongues, and talk as well
As men or books; nor do they take amiss
The questions ask'd them, nor refuse to tell
Their secrets to the souls that, lingering there,
Have learn'd their language.

What this listener heard,
There lingering long, he may not here declare.
But many a tale to him by beast and bird
In Fable Land imparted (if time spare
The life of any purpose long deferr'd,
Or to postponed occasion, when 'tis won,
Recall an errant will's disbanded powers)
Fain would he tell beneath the lingering sun
Of months unborn, that hide midsummer hours
Whose golden gossamers have not yet spun
Their shining clues to still-unblossom'd bowers.

L'ENVOI.

AD ÆSOPUM.

1.

SAY, Æsop, wast thou born a slave,
Who dost so freely speak?
Thy thoughts so upright and so brave!
Thy back so bent and weak?
So ugly and so coarse thy face?
And, in thy fancies all, such grace!

2.

Did thy rude comrades play thee pranks,
Thy master beat thee sore,
Yet live to own with grateful thanks
Thy wit had saved his store?
How fail'd such wit thyself to save
From an unjust and cruel grave?

3.

Hadst thou, indeed, a stammering tongue,
Splay foot and limping walk,
Whose children are so fair and strong?
Didst thou with Solon talk?
And didst thou sup with Crœsus too
At Sardian feasts? Is all that true?

4.

Vain questions! Not to us nor thee,
Dear Sage, it matters now
If true or false the stories be
Of what thou *wast*: for thou
Art what we *are*: and all thou art
We all receive, and all impart.

5.

Of thee, who knewst the world so well,
Not much the world hath known:
Thy voice to us doth only tell
Our secrets, not thine own:
But thou before us everywhere
Hast been, and still we find thee there

6.

Great Sire of Fable! Age to age
Extends, from north to south
From east to west, thine heritage,
That grows from mouth to mouth.
And, with its growth still growing thus,
Thou art thyself grown fabulous.

POEMS.

TRANSFORMATIONS.

(A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.)

I.

"HERE at last alone,
You and I together!
All the night our own,
And the warm June weather!
Not a soul in sight!
What we will, we may.
Nothing is by night
As it was by day.
Look around you! See,
All things change themselves.
Blossom, bower, and tree
Turn to Fays and Elves;
Trivial things and common

Into rare things rising.
Why should man and woman
Be less enterprising?
Fashion's formal creatures
We till now have been,
With prim-pattern'd features
And a borrow'd mien.
Now the mask is broken,
Now the fetters fall,
Wishes long unspoken
Now are all in all!
Wondrous transformation
Now, for you and me,
Waits our invocation.
Say, what shall we be?"

2.

"What you will," said She.

3.

" Look, then, and listen! For you must be waiting,
Behind a high grating,
The sound of my signal. Along the wild land
I have gallop'd full speed on my coal-black steed
To free my love from my foeman's hand,
And lo! in the moonlight alert I stand
Close under the castle wall.
Look out, I am here!
Leap down, nor fear!
For into my rescuing arms you fall,
Safe and free. They are round you, see!
One saddle must serve us, so cling to me well,
And away, and away, thro' the night we flee!
But hark! 'Tis the clang of the 'larum bell.
Our pursuers awake. For dear life's sake
Cling to me closer, and closer still!
And speed, speed, my coal-black steed!

They are hurrying after us over the hill.
But clear'd is the river, and cross'd is the heath,
Deep into the sheltering woods we dart,
And O what a ride! for I feel your breath,
And how hot it burns! and I hear your heart,
And how loud it beats! as I laugh 'We part
No more, come life come death!'"

"No, no,"
She sigh'd, "not so!
Too fiercely fleets your coal-black steed,
And pleasure faints in passion's speed,
And the bliss that lingers the best must be,"
Sigh'd She.

5.

"Listen, then, and look, once more!
We are sailing round a southern island.

Fragrant breathes the dusky shore,
Folded under many a moonlit highland.
Fragrant breathes the dusky shore,
And where dips the languid oar
Wavelets dimple flash and darkle,
Odours wander, fireflies sparkle:
Thro' them all our bark is gliding,
Gliding softly, gliding slowly:
Not a cloud their sweetness hiding,
All the heavens are husht and holy:
Midnight's panting pulse uncertain
Faintly fans the heaving curtain
O'er the silken-pillow'd seat
Where you lie with slipper'd feet,
Tresses loosed, and zone unbound;
While, my ribbon'd lute unslinging,
I, your troubadour, beside you,
O'er its chords, that trembling sound,

Pour the song my soul is singing:
List, and let its music guide you,
Till the goal of dreams be found!"

6.

"Ah, stay so!"
She murmur'd low,
"Song and stream forever flow!
And, if this be dreaming, never
Let me wake, but dream for ever,
Dreaming thus, if dream it be!"
Then He:

7.

"As night's magic blends together
Moonbeams, starbeams, odours, dews,
In a hush of happy weather,
Earth and heaven to interfuse;
So my song draws softly down

All your soul into mine own,
Bounteous gift on gift bestowing:
First, that heaven, your face; and then
Heaven's divinest stars, those eyes
Under dewy lashes glowing;
Last, those lips, whose smile caresses
All their breath beatifies;
And the fragrance o'er me flowing
From those downward-shaken tresses,
Whose delicious wildernesses
Hide such haunts of happy sighs!"

8.

"Rise, ah rise!"
Faint She whisper'd. "Hold me fast!
For away the fixt earth flies,
And I know not where we are.
What is coming? What is past?

Bursting, flashing, fleeting, see,
Swiftly star succeeds to star
Till . . . . in what new world are we?"
"Love's," said He.

9.

"Song and lute the spell obeying,
Cease in silence sweeter, stronger,
Than song-singing or lute-playing:
And, entranced, I know no longer
Whither are my senses straying:
But I feel my spirit blending
With the bliss of thine, and ending
Tremulously lost in thee!"

10.

"Hush!" sigh'd She,
"Lest this dream, if dream alone

And no more than dream it be,

By a breath should be undone.

For ah," She sigh'd,

"I and thou, what are we now?"

And He replied,

"Thou art I, and I am thou,

And we are one!"

NORTH AND SOUTH,

1.

FAR in the southern night she sleeps;
And there the heavens are husht, and there,
Low murmuring from the moonlit deeps,
Faint music lulls the dreamful air.
No tears on her soft lashes hang,
On her calm lips no kisses glow.
The throb, the passion, and the pang
Are over now.

2.

But I? From this full-peopled north,
Whose midnight roar around me stirs,
How wildly still my heart goes forth
To haunt that silent home of hers!
There night by night, with no release,
These sleepless eyes the vision see,
And all its visionary peace
But maddens me.

ATHENS.

(1865.)

THE burnt-out heart of Hellas here behold!
Quench'd fire-pit of the quick explosive Past,
Thought's highest crater—all its fervours cold,
Ashes and dust at last!

And what Hellenic light is living now
To gild, not Greece, but other lands, is given:
Not where the splendour sank, the after-glow
Of sunset stays in heaven.

But loud o'er Grecian ruins still the lark
Doth, as of old, Hyperion's glory hail,
And from Hymettus, in the moonlight, hark
The exuberant nightingale!

CINTRA.

(1868.)

1.

In the brake are creaking
The tufted canes,
And the wind is streaking
With fugitive stains
A welkin haunted by hovering rains.

2.

Low lemon-boughs under
My garden-wall,
In the Quinta yonder,
By fits let fall
Here an emerald leaf, there a pale gold ball,

3.

On the black earth, studded
With droplets bright
From the fruit trees, budded,
Some pink, some white,
And now overflooded with watery light.

4.

For the sun, thro' a chasm
Of the colourless air,
With a jubilant spasm
From his broken lair
Upleaps and stands, for a moment, bare!

5.

But a breath bewilders
The wavering weather;

And those sky-builders
That put together
The vaporous walls of the cloud-bound ether

6.

From the mountains hasten
In pale displeasure
To mortice and fasten
The bright embrasure,
Shutting behind it day's innermost azure.

7.

On the bleak blue rim
Of the lonesome lea,
Shapeless and dim
As far things at sea,
Mafra yon nebulous clump must be!

8.

Across the red furrows
To where in the sides
Of the hills he burrows
(As a reptile hides)
The many-legg'd, long-back'd, aqueduct strides.

9.

Just over the pines,
As from tapers snuff'd,
A thin smoke twines
Till its course is luff'd
At the edge of the cliff, by the breeze rebuff'd;

10.

Whence, downward turning
A dubious haze,

(From the charcoal-burning)
It strays, delays,
And departs by a dozen different ways.

11.

The chestnuts shiver,
The olive trees
Recoil and quiver,
Stung by the breeze,
Like sleepers awaked by a swarm of bees.

12.

Down glimmering lanes
The grey oxen go;
And the grumbling wains
They drag onward slow
Wail, as they wind in a woeful row,

13.

With fruits and casks
To the seaside land,
Where Colares basks
In a glory bland,
And from gardens o'erhanging the scented sand

14.

Great aloes glisten
And roses dangle.
But listen! listen!
The mule-bells jangle,
Rounding the rock-hewn path's sharp angle.

15.

As their chime dies out
The dim woods among,

With the ghostly shout
And the distant song
Of the muleteers that have pass'd along,

16.

From behind the hill
Whence comes that roar,
Up the road so still
But a minute before?
'Tis a message arrived from the grieved sea shore.

17.

And, tho' close it seems,
Yet from far away
It is come, as in dreams
The announcements they
To the souls that can understand convey.

18.

For whenever you hear,
As you hear it now,
That sound so clear,
You may surely know
Foul weather's at hand, tho' no wind should blow.

19.

But the cork wood is sighing,
It cannot find rest;
And the raven, flying
Around his black nest,
Hath signall'd the storm to the Sierra's crest.

20.

Plaintive and sullen,
Penalva moans;

The torrents are swollen;
The granite bones
Of Cruzalta crackle with split pine cones;

21.

Roused and uproarious
The huge oaks yell
Till the ghost of Honorius
Is scared from his cell,
Where not even a ghost could in quietude dwell;

22.

For the woods all round
Its cork-clad walls
Are storm'd by the sound
Of the waterfalls
That have shatter'd their mountain pedestals.

23.

On the topmost shelf
Of the Pena, fast
As the rock itself,
In a cluster vast
Stood castle and keep but a moment past;

24.

Now, in what to the sight
Is but empty air,
They are vanisht quite,
And the sharp peak, bare
As a shaven chin, is upslanted there.

25.

Can a film of cloud,
Like the fiat of Fate,

In its sightless shroud
Thus obliterate
The ponderous mass of a pile so great?

26.

'Twas a fact, yet a breath
Has that fact dispell'd.
So truth, underneath
A cloud compell'd
To hide her head, is no more beheld.

27.

The achievement of years,
By a minute effaced,
Departs, disappears,
And is all replaced
By a cold blank colourless empty waste.

28.

All forms, alas,
That remain or flee
As the winds that pass
May their choice decree,
Stand faster far than have stood by me

29.

The man I served,
And the woman I loved.
But what if they swerved
As their faith was proved,
When a mountain can be by a mist removed?

SORRENTO REVISITED.

(1885.)

On the lizarded wall and the gold-orb'd tree
Spring's splendour again is shining.;
But the glow of its gladness awakes in me
Only a vast repining.

To Sorrento, asleep on the soft blue breast
Of the sea that she loves, and dreaming,
Lone Capri uplifts an ethereal crest
In the luminous azure gleaming.

And the Sirens are singing again from the shore.
'Tis the song that they sang to Ulysses;
But the sound of a song that is sung no more
My soul in their music misses.

FRAGRANCE.

(A SPRING BALLAD.)

DEDICATION

TO ——

HERE Spring with her gifts is come.
She hath given white buds to the hedge,
To the wandering swallow a home,
And a rose to your window ledge.
In return for the gifts she gave
A gift for herself she sought,
And I, of the best I have,
Gave to her a single thought.
That thought was a thought of you,
Spring laid it the leaves among,
There fed it on light and dew,
And return'd it to me in a song.
So the twice-given gift, as to me
Spring brought it, to you I bring:
For this song is the child of three,
Us two, and our playmate, Spring.

BALLAD.

1.

THE soul of all the souls that have become
Sweet odours, I am Fragrance from afar.
Deep hid in Beauty's bosom was my home,
And known to me her inmost mysteries are.

2.

I know the secret of the Rose. She blushes,
I know the reason why.
A hopeless passion in her heart she hushes
For the bright Beetle-Fly.
He was a bold and brilliant cavalier:
He woo'd her in the love-time of the year
A livelong summer day:
He woo'd her, and he won her: then betray'd her,
And, breaking all the vows that he had made her,
Upon a sky-built sunbeam sail'd away.

3.

Then the Rose wisht for wings to follow him,
But all her wishings were of no avail.
What she could do, she did. In pilgrim trim
From bower to bower she wander'd down the dale,
And climb'd and climb'd, and peep'd into the dim
Nest of the Nightingale.

4.

The Nightingale beheld her, and averr'd
That she was fairest of the fair. He said,
"Fair crimson-wingèd creature, be a bird!
And I with thee, and none but thee, will wed."
His amorous song the Rose resentful heard,
And shook her head.

5.

Into that amorous song there slid a tear.
The Rose was weeping, sad at heart was she.

But still the Nightingale with song sincere
Sang to her in the twilight from the tree.
"O wert thou but a bird! thou art so dear,
Thee would I mate with, and wed none but thee!"
"Nay," sigh'd the Rose, "I seek mine absent fere,
A lover bold and born of high degree,
My heart is sad because he is not here,
Sir Scarabæus he!"

6.

The Evening Wind pass'd by, and heard her boast,
And to the Rose he whisper'd, laughing low,
"Poor Rose, thine absent lover thou hast lost,
For he is faithless, and forsaken thou!
I met him on my travels at the Court
Of Queen Spiræa of Ulmaria.
The Meadow Queen is she, and all amort
Sir Scarabæus, for her sake, that day

Had sworn to break a lance. The tilt was short,
I left him lying wounded in the dust,
And only know that, by the last report,
Thy gallant had received a mortal thrust.
Now all the common flowers that far and wide
Have envied thee because thou art so fair
Are laughing at thee. But whate'er betide,
Come thou with me, and I will bring thee where
Thou yet mayst find him in his fallen pride."
The poor Rose hung her head, and, in despair,
"Had I but wings!" she sigh'd,
"Had I but wings!"

7.

With laughter light again,
"Thou hast them," that perfidious Wind replied,
"And I will show thee how to use them." Then
He breathed upon the Rose, and, undenied,

Pluckt from her one by one her petals fair;
But, soon dissatisfied
With his sweet theft, along the thankless air
He tost the stolen petals here and there,
And off he hied.

8.

Me for himself he would have kept. But I
Beheld thee, as the Evening Wind went by
Bearing me with him. To the Wind I said
"Wait for me!" and I slid into thy soul.
When the Wind miss'd me he believed me dead,
And so went on without me to his goal,
Which he shall never reach, for every hour
It changes.
From that moment I became
The inmate of thy thoughts. I have the power
To perfume all the paths they haunt. My name

Another's lips must teach thine own to spell.
Untold I leave it, lest the Evening Star
Should guess it in thine eyes. With thee to dwell,
And thine to be for ever, from afar
I come with secrets laden, I can tell
To none but thee. So sweet my whispers are,
That with their fragrance fill'd is every thought
That I have breathed on. Maiden pure and fair,
A paradise of perfumes I have brought
That thy sweet soul may breathe in sweetest air.
Ah, keep it! The Soul's Fragrance lost, can aught
That loss repair?

LINES*

COMPOSED IN SLEEP.

THIS is the place. Here flourish'd Wicked Deeds
And wither'd, in a world without a name,
Buried ere ours was born. Fierce troops of Crimes
Weapon'd and crown'd, athwart a desert land
Of wasted loveliness, to reach this place
Travell'd in pomp: here settled, and here died,

* These lines are the result of a slumber, not induced by any narcotic, from which the writer awoke under an extraordinarily vivid impression that he had composed in his sleep a poem of considerable length. Of the purport of the poem he retained only a vague and shadowy notion; but more than a hundred lines of it were lingering (as it seemed to him) so distinctly in his recollection that he hastened to write them down. His memory however (or the illusion which had usurped the function of memory) suddenly and completely failed him at the point where this fragment breaks off. He has never been able to complete it; and it is printed here, without alteration, as a psychological curiosity.

Grown old and weak: and, dying left behind
No chronicle upon the bare rock graven
Of what they were or what they did. The lives
They cramm'd with evil, all their wicked loves,
Their wicked hates, Death and slow Time have turn'd
Into a sly grey silent ghostliness,
A stealthy-footed Fear, that prowls for prey,
Creeps on the wretch who wanders here unwarn'd,
Catches him, with long fingers, by the head,
Nor lets him go till all his mind is gone.

This was their city's tower'd acropolis,
This sprawling hoop of roofless ruin huge
Whose heart is hollowness. These broken ribs
Of crumbled stone and mounds of rippling grass
Were walls whose builders, when those walls were built,
Kings put to death, that none the plan might tell

Of secret chambers cruelly contrived,
For lust and murder: and therein were born
Abominable pleasures. Round them now
Rank ivy rustles with the revelry
Of spangled reptiles. Down in a dry well
There hath been dwelling for three thousand years
An old white newt, whiter than leprosy.
He only knows the long-forgotten names
Of those strong scarlet blossoms on the brink
That once were Sins. * * * * *

PROMETHEIA.

(FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND PRESS, ET CÆTERA.)

MEPHISTOPHELES (ad spectatores)
" Am ende hängen wir doch ab
Von creaturen die wir machten."—
Faust.—Second Part. (Birth of the Homunculus.)

PART THE FIRST.

"GOD of the Gods, and Lord of Heaven! Since now
Repentant Power rejects not Reason's use,
Here on the Path of Progress stay not thou
Thy steps by me well-counsell'd!" (Thus to Zeus
Prometheus spake.) "From Earth's primordial womb
Mute to the birth her progeny are brought.
To death they go, as into life they come,
Condemn'd to suffer all and utter nought.
Read in the language of their longing eyes
The passionate petition of the dumb,

And grant the long'd-for gift, mere life denies,
A voice to Will, to Feeling, and to Thought!"

But Zeus, mistrustful, murmur'd "To what end?"
"No end of ends," he answer'd, "and in each
A fresh beginning! for with better fraught
Is every best, as world on world ascend,
In ceaseless self-upliftings, life's immense
Capacities of growth. Voice leads to speech,
Speech to intelligence, intelligence
To liberty, and liberty" . . . . "To what?"
Zeus interrupted. "Ever out of reach
Thy thoughts run on, and all thy language still
Sounds revolutionary." "Still! why not?"
Prometheus laugh'd. "We share the imputed crime.
From revolutionary fountains flow
Fresh streams of force; and, tho' enthroned sublime
On spoil'd Olympus, what thyself wert thou
Without the Revolution, Son of Time?"

"Titan," the God, with darkening aspect, sigh'd,
"It was to ravish, not retain, a throne
That on the Revolution we relied;
Wherein thy services have every one
Been well requited." "Ay," Prometheus cried,
"Witness Mount Caucasus!" "What's done is done,"
Zeus answer'd. "Not till thou hadst turn'd our foe
And filch'd our fire, did we retaliate thus.
But witness also thou, that (long ago
Recall'd with recompense from Caucasus)
Thee hath our later friendship favour'd so,
That thine is now copartnership with us
In all our own Olympian empery,
By thy weird wisdom guided. Why discuss
The unalterable past? Nor thou nor I
Fresh conflict crave. This much concede." "I do,"
Prometheus mutter'd, "and the reason why
Full well, Fate-driven Thunderer, I know!

For thy reluctant power perforce obeys
The strict compulsions of Necessity."
"Her iron yoke," replied the God, "she lays
On Gods and Titans both, and none can close,
None ope, her hidden hand. Forget the days
That disunited us, nor indispose
A confidence that fain would rest assured
Rather in him sage Themis loves to praise,
Than in the perjured Titan who abjured
The cause of his own kindred." "And for whose,
Ungrateful God?" "Nay, my Prometheus, mine
The cause, I know, for which thou didst change sides."
"Not thine," the indignant Titan cried, "not thine!
Nor thine nor thee, Monarch of Parricides
From Sire to Son, I sought! In god or worm
I care not where the sign of it I see,
But let me find, beneath the poorest germ,
Some promise of improvement, that to free

A hinder'd progress to a higher term
Needs all the aid a Titan can afford,
And mine shall not be wanting to confirm
The effort that aspires to overcome!"

Zeus, shaking his sheaved thunders at the word,
Exclaim'd, "Inveterately venturesome!
Whom should the upstart overcome? Not me?"
"And why not thee," Prometheus cried, "new lord
Of a usurpt dominion? Why not thee,
Thee and thy kindred all, whose starry home
To Kronos once belong'd, if its endeavour
Of higher worth than thine and theirs should be?
Kronides, never have I flatter'd, never
Deceived thee, or betray'd! Forget not thou
That in the Race of Uranus for ever
Power hath been lost and won by overthrow.
Unoverthrown, wouldst thou preserve it, dare
To rule without oppression! Fearless now,

Fling the lone scepter of a world-wide care
Into the lap of Freedom! Safest thus
Shall its supremacy remain, for there
Rebellion breathes not. Had not Kronos pent
Our Giant Brotherhood in Tartarus,
His might have been (thy treason to prevent)
The hundred-handed help he lack'd of us.
Confide in Liberty, the friend of all,
And live by all befriended! With her, grow
From growth to growth, in a perpetual
Increase of growing greatness! So shalt thou,
Still onward borne with all that's onward going,
Be never by-gone, never out of date!
'Tis at the price of ever greater growing
Eternity is granted to the great."

Zeus answer'd with an indecisive sigh.
"Prophet," he said, "who, in the hoary Past

Where the old Gods and the old Ages lie,
Sole of thy kindred didst the hour forecast
Which thou alone survivest, prophecy
(If still the gift of prophecy thou hast)
What destiny for me, should I deny
The gift thou cravest, is reserved by Fate?"
"The sadness of immense satiety,"
Prometheus murmur'd. "Pause and meditate!"
He added. "I, the Spokesman of the Dumb,
Am also Seer of the Unseen." "But what,"
Zeus sigh'd again, "will they next crave, to whom
The voice to crave it hath been granted?" "That
Shall they themselves inform thee by and by,"
Exclaim'd the surly Giant, and thereat
His shoulders huge he shrugg'd.
Without reply
Zeus mused awhile; but, spying Eros pass
Full-quiver'd for a chase of sweeter cry

Than Cynthia leads along the moonlit grass,
When, thro' the rustling grove and glimpsing sky,
Thin shadows, fast pursued by shadows, flee,
The God, impatient, glanced at Earth's mute mass;
Then waved an acquiescent hand, as he
Turn'd from the Titan with a faint "Alas,
Prometheus, thou art compromising me!"

PART II.

Leaving in haste the Olympian Council Hall,
The apostate Titan down to Earth convey'd
The grudged concession wrung from Zeus. There, all
In conclave multitudinous array'd,
His clients he together call'd (from man
In fair Apollo's faultless image made,
To man's close copy, made on the same plan,
The flat-faced ape) and all the bars undid

Which had till then lock'd mercifully fast
The innumerable voices that, unchid,
Now into riotous utterance rush'd at last.

This done, preferring to appreciate
The concert from a distance, he return'd
To the Olympians—in whose looks irate
A relisht indignation he discern'd.
The Gods and Goddesses, the Demigods
And Demigoddesses, all demi-nude,
(As Classic Art's correctest periods
Prescribed to each the appropriate attitude)
Were listening, with more wonder than delight,
To the new noisiness of earthly things.
For quick and thick each animal appetite
Throbb'd into sudden sound from the loud strings
Of throats in thousands loosed; and left and right
Chirrupings, crowings, howlings, bellowings,
And barkings—bass and treble of mingled mirth

And pain—were now profusely vomited
In vehement hubbub from the vocal Earth.

Meanwhile, as with sloped shoulder, shuffling tread
Evasive, mien morose, and furtive eye,
Thro' Heaven's bright groups the burly Titan sped,
Their comments were not complimentary.
"Please to explain," resentful Herè said,
"This new caprice, or stop that peacock's cry
My bird will be a byword and a scoff
If this continues!" "Ah, Fair Majesty,
This new caprice is an old debt paid off,"
Prometheus answer'd. "Fops in pomp array'd
Must now reveal what's *in* them, to the ear,
Who, to the eye, have heretofore display'd
Only what's *on* them. But have thou no fear,
Thy favourite makes an admirable show—
From one so beautiful exact no more!"
Eos complain'd of the cock's clamorous crow,

Superfluously sounded o'er and o'er.
" Prometheus might at least," she said, " for me
Have managed to contrive a less absurd
And indiscreetly strepitant minstrelsy
Than the loud shriek of that ridiculous bird ! "
" Sweet Cousin, thine indulgence," he replied,
" For the cicala's strains (I grant that these
Have not as yet been duly deified)
Leaves to less plaintive notes small chance to please
An ear compassionately prejudiced.
Sleep sounder, and wake later ! What hath drawn
Thy blushing charms, untimely thus enticed,
O rosy-finger'd Daughter of the Dawn,
From that soft couch Love's self were fain to lie on ?
Is it the memory of Cephalus,
Or else the expectation of Orion ? "

With jests sarcastic curtly answering thus

The just reproaches of the Gods, that great
Ungainly Titan strode from spot to spot,
Superbly heedless of the scorn and hate
His course provoked. Olympus loved him not,
Despite his ancient birth and lineage high;
And even the new-made Deities, whose past
Was but of yesterday, with sidelong eye
Look'd on him as a god of lower caste.
The restless spirit that from his peers in Heaven
Ever aloof the unquiet Giant held
Had to his strenuous Titanism given
A tone incongruously coarse. Impell'd
By unintelligible vehemence,
His uncouth grandeur grieved the fluent grace
Of the Olympian Quiet with intense
Abrupt explosive ardours; as apace
On its swift course, all rough with rocks and roots,
And fiercely fluttering with volcanic fire,

Some ravaged morsel of a mountain shoots
Across the cloven crystal of a lake
In whose clear depths stars and still clouds admire
The lucid forms their own reflections take.

Sole, Aphroditè (she, that Fairest Fair,
Whose sacred sweetness from its rancorous tooth
The Titan's biting wit was pleased to spare,
—She for whose solitary sake, in truth,
The sullen menace of his face at whiles
A fond mysterious fervour unavow'd
Made soft and luminous with hovering smiles,
Like summer lightnings thro' a sleeping cloud)
Sole, Aphroditè found a curious charm
In this grim God-born Mocker of the Gods;
And, waving to Prometheus her white arm,
She beckon'd him with amicable nods.
Submissive to her signal he drew near,
And with a questioning gaze the Goddess eyed.

"Titan, well done!" she whisper'd in his ear;
"What long on Earth I miss'd thou hast supplied.
I love the lion's roar, the ring-dove's coo:
By both alike love's needs are well express'd:
The amorous bull's deep bellowing charms me too.
But why hast thou withheld the last and best
Of all thy gifts from those who, tho' but few,
Most claim on thy solicitude possess'd?"
Prometheus, by astonishment tongue-tied,
An interrogatory eyebrow raised.
"Those larks and nightingales that yonder hide,"
The Goddess answer'd as on Earth she gazed,
"Inaudible and invisible to all!
Darkling they haunt the shadows round them furl'd,
Silent amidst the universal brawl
And babble of the emancipated world.
Yet heaven is husht to hear their minstrelsy:
For these the moon and stars are not too sweet,

For those the sun himself is not too high:
And shall they have no listeners? Hearts that beat
With base emotions find ignoble voice,
Wrath, and Unreason, and Vulgarity
Speak loud. Stupidity and Spite rejoice
In utterance unrestricted. Say, then, why
(Where Folly's fife with Envy's clarion vies)
Must these alone, the darlings of the Spring,
Whose souls are fill'd with lyric ecstacies,
Unheard, or even if heard unheeded, sing?"

The Titan's eye, with a soul-searching glare,
Sounded the secret dwelling undescried
In those small bosoms. "And what seest thou there?"
The Goddess ask'd him. Sighing he replied
"What I should have foreseen!" "But what is that?"
Full on the glorious beauty of her face
Prometheus gazed. "O Goddess, ask not what!

Thou who, supreme in beauty and in grace,
Art by adoring worlds proclaim'd divine,
What kindred could thy confident godhood trace
In a shy loveliness so unlike thine?
A loveliness of its own self afraid,
A Bastard Beauty, fearing to be seen,
Yet fainting to be loved, that seeks the shade!"
The Goddess laugh'd "What doth my Titan mean?
What bastard is he speaking of?" And he,
"Ay, 'tis a Beauty bastard-born, and not
Authentically certified to be,
A Beauty surreptitiously begot
From Heaven's embrace of Earth, and breathing, see,
Between them both in secrecy and shame
An unacknowledged life!" "But what," said she,
Is this poor Heaven-born Earth-child's luckless name?"
"Its name," Prometheus sigh'd, "is POESY."
"A woman?" "No." "A man, then?" "Ah, still less!"

The glorious sexual Goddess blush'd outright,
"Is Hermes, then, a father?" "Nay, my guess
"Divines not Hermes." "Zeus, then? am I right?"
"I doubt..." "If there's a doubt, 'tis Zeus! Suppress
The father's name, however. Well we know
The mother is the love-tale's text, of course,
The father but the pretext. Name the mother!"
"But thou wouldst not believe me..." "Worse and worse!
'Tis Herè, then?" "Not Herè." "There's no other
Of whom the thing's incredible—unless
Perchance 'tis Pallas?" "No alas, not she!"
"And why alas?" With keen suggestiveness,
For sole reply the Titan glowingly
Gazed on the Goddess, till she blush'd again,
"Matchless impertinent!" But he, unmoved,
"Goddess, I warn'd thee that thou wouldst not deign
To give me credit..." "For such pert unproved

Assertion? Fie, to say it to my face!"
"But I said nothing." "And yet all implied.
What next, I wonder!" "Queen of every grace
And all that's beautiful," Prometheus cried,
"Tell me *thy* parents!" "Known to all are they,
Zeus and Dione, both of them divine."
"They!" cried the Titan, "they thy parents? Nay,
Great and dear Goddess, beauty such as thine
Had nobler birth! Those stupid Gods are not
The true begetters of a deity
Above their own. 'Twas otherwise begot.
Slid from the starry bosom of the sky,
A single drop of sacred ichor pure,
The mystic blood of Uranus, contain'd
In one bright bead thy whole progeniture:
Hid in the heart of Ocean it remain'd
Till there it brought thy wondrous self to birth:
And, even so, one glimpse of Heaven unstain'd,

That fell reflected in a glance from Earth
To Heaven uplifted, this new Beauty bore—
Which hath no sex, no mother, and no sire,
No kin on Earth, no home in Heaven—nay more,
'Tis neither man nor woman, but the soul,
Of the wide world's unsatisfied desire.
And thro' the universe, without a goal,
Its hungering heart must wander high and higher,
Till from the Gods it gain (as I, for those
Poor mortals yonder, snatch'd from Zeus his fire)
The immortality they dread to lose."

"But this new Beauty, do those bosoms small
Enshrine it?" ask'd the Goddess. "Ah, subdued,"
Prometheus murmur'd bitterly, "by all
The vulgar voices of the multitude
That loves its own monopoly of noise,
No homage hath the homeless one on Earth!
And vainly its unanswer'd song employs

The gift I gave. In darkness and in dearth,
By noise and glare engirt, unheard it sings,
Unseen it stirs. For this, from Zeus I craved,
What he denies me still, the gift of wings—
For birds—birds only—that in some sweet bird
Life's sweetest voice, from Earth's loud hubbub saved,
Might soar in song to Heaven, and there be heard.
Never while man breathes mortal breath shall he,
The Earthborn, hand or foot from Earth withdraw:
For there uplifted must his kingdom be
By agelong labour. Language, there, and Law
Hath he to found; create, for social power
And spacious trade, the Senate and the Mart;
Establish Science in her starry tower,
And mint the glowing miracles of Art.
Such is the task by me for man design'd!
But ever, as on Earth his task he plies,
Higher than foot and hand must heart and mind,

Uplifted o'er the earthly labour, rise.
Let mind and heart, then, heavenward pathways find
Upon the wings of every bird that flies,
While hand and foot stay fast to Earth confined;
Lest Earth should haply lose her fairest prize,
The hand of man: whose fingers five shall bind
Together all that his five wits' rejoice
To wrench from Time's tenacious treasuries,
As, guided onward by a wingèd voice,
Earth's wingless lord to his high future hies!'

PART III.

The Titan quiver'd. Strenuous tremours ran
Thro' his huge limbs, rocking their heaviness
Like wind-rack'd oaks; and his deep eyes began
To glow with a prophetic passion. "Yes!
And then," he murmur'd, "then the Race of Man

(Taught by that winged voice) perchance may guess
The giant purpose, the stupendous plan
That, brooding o'er its cloudy cradle, I
Have for the infant fashion'd. Changeless Gods,
What profits you your immortality?
Thro' endless self-repeating periods
To be the same for ever, is to be
For ever lacking life's divinest gift,
The faculty of growth. No inch can ye
Your future o'er your present selves uplift.
What good in such prolong'd ineptitude?
But to be ever growing young again,
From age to age eternally renew'd
With breath new-born, and ardour to attain
Goals ever new, by courses never done,
—This gift, to gods ungiven, or given in vain,
My forethought hath reserved for man alone!
Death was the blind condition jealous Zeus,

To balk my purpose, on mankind imposed,
But Death my purpose serves: for Death renews
Man's youth, whose course old age might else have closed.
Unprescient God, 'tis well thou couldst not guess
That to these hands the fetter forged by thee
Gave all required by their inventiveness
To shape the sword that cuts each fetter free!
MANKIND MUST DIE! The fiat forth is gone.
Die? When I heard that word of doom proclaim'd,
More self-restraint I needed to suppress
A shout of joy, than when my strangled groan
Burst not the bitten lips its anguish shamed,
And not a cry revealed the dumb distress
Of my Caucasian martyrdom. By Death
The Race of Man shall be from age to age
Replenisht with the perdurable breath
Of endless birth, and vigour to engage

In ventures new. Death's sickle, as it reaps
The old grain, to the young the soil restores,
And still the harvest springs, and the soil keeps
Still fresh for growth its disencumber'd pores.
A man is dead, long live Mankind! From soul
To soul each life's acquest triumphantly
Passes in sure succession. Ages roll,
And in a hundred ages (what care I
How many births as many deaths succeed?)
Man's Race, enrich'd a hundredfold thereby,
Remains as young as ever. Oft with heed
Have I the Ocean watch'd, and watch'd the shore.
The sand, rejected by the wave's wild shock,
Gathers in heaps and, growing more and more,
And high and higher, hardens till at last
The wave returning breaks upon a rock,
And is itself rejected. Tost and cast
By Time's recurrent waves, son after sire,

From death to death, like that sea-driven sand,
Grains of Humanity, with past on past
Your greatening future pile, and high and higher,
Based on each others' buried shoulders, stand!"

"What art thou muttering?" Aphroditè said.
"Mysterious dreamer, dost thou meditate
The Gods' destruction?" High his shaggy head
The Titan lifted, and replied elate,
"Not thine, Anadyomenè, not thine!
Passion's imperishable autocrat,
Thee only of the Gods I deem divine,
And permanent is thy sweet power as Fate.
Receive mine oath, and aid me!"

"How? In what?"

"Inspire in Zeus the wish to be a bird
That he may woo a mortal."

Letting fall
Sweet lids o'er sunny eyes as this she heard,
The Goddess smiled, and answer'd "Is that all?"

PART IV.

Pretentious patrons of mankind, what pranks
However monstrous has your pride disdain'd
For pushing forward its own purpose? Thanks
To your activity, what tears have stain'd
The trophies of man's progress! What a sea
Of blood, to float your cockle-boats, been shed!
Your fellow man from prejudice to free,
Your fellow man's incorrigible head
Have you chopp'd off with philanthropic glee,
By basketfuls, benign Philanthropists!
And, promising a better life instead,

This life have you, evangelising Priests,
With penance fill'd! Your famed philosophies,
By way of throwing light on what men find
Compassionately dark, burn out their eyes,
Vaunting Philosophers! In vain mankind
For refuge from its benefactors sighs.

His purposes humane the Titan's mind
Found less inhuman means to realise.
He merely made a god ridiculous.
When Zeus had, for the sake of Ganymede,
Assumed an eagle's form, succumbing thus
To Aphroditè's influence, thro' that deed
The Son of Asia and Iäpetus
His end attain'd. For how thenceforth could Zeus
(Plagued by the importunate solicitings
Of such a crafty counsellor) refuse
Even to the meanest bird a pair of wings?

Promiscuous benefits can rarely claim
A better origin. To elevate
One favourite, lest it should incur the blame
Of personal preference in affairs of State,
Some dozen mediocrities as high
The Crown must needs advance. If, still irate,
The Public Voice protests, to brave its cry
There are at least thirteen instead of one:
Th[illegible]ong, moreover, that is done thereby
[illegible] one in particular is done;
[illegible] but a general calamity,
And that is an indignity to none.

Yet vast and irremediable was
The failure of Prometheus. From the day
He universalised the voice, alas,
Whilst every vulgar brute could say his say,
No souls refined and delicate remain'd

No refuge from the hubbub all around
But their own silence: and such souls refrain'd
(Dumfounded quite by a disgust profound)
From audible utterance. The loquacious zest
Of Earth's coarse crowd had in the finer few
Life's highest note unknowingly suppress'd.
That was the Titan's first mistake. A new
And worse one he fell into, in his quest
Of means to mend it: for he did but brew
A base resentment in the human breast
By giving wings to birds. Man's envy drew
Between the smallest sparrow and himself
Comparisons, from one grudged point of view,
Displeasing to the self-conceited elf.
A third mistake Prometheus might have then
Committed, and from Zeus in some weak mood
The envied gift of wings for envious men
Perchance obtain'd, had Man's Ingratitude

Not prematurely ended his career.

Mortals, and mortals to a man agreed
In censuring all attempts to interfere
With their mortality, men first decreed
The Abolition of the Gods: and here,
Prometheus held their sacrilegious deed
Was justifiable, altho' severe:
[illegible]lt men no sooner from the Gods were freed,
Tha[illegible] of a Titan's aid so sure they were
[illegible] godless freedom had no further need,
[illegible] they forthwith proclaim'd it everywhere
Mankind's Titanic Patron had become
To man no more than an enormous myth;
The monstrous trance of dreaming Heathendom,
Not to be any longer trusted with
Traditional influence on the human mind.
Thus, having fail'd to benefit the few,
And by the ungrateful multitude malign'd,

A sad self-exile, seeking to eschew
The sight of his own failure in mankind,
Prometheus from man's fatuous world withdrew.

But first to his lame brother he resign'd
His slighted scepter. Epimetheus sought
To avenge Prometheus, and rebuke men's blind
Ingratitude for gifts that cost them nought.
Strict penalties to granted prayers he join'd,
And punish'd with a knowledge dearly bought
The pride that had disdainfully declined
Gratuitous instruction. AFTERTHOUGHT
Succeeded FORETHOUGHT as the Ruling Power
Of Progress, and the Race of Man was taught
A painful prudence by Pandora's dower
Of ever unanticipated woes
From wishes born.

The formidable place
Of his first martyrdom Prometheus chose
For his last refuge from a thankless race.
There, wandering far and farther out of sight,
Along waste ways indefinite as those
Traced by the shadows travelling in the flight
Of silent clouds o'er solitary snows,
"Rash Race of Suicides!" he mused in scorn,

to your own precocious appetite
All'n a prey: your future yet unborn
ve devour'd: and, fumbled ere unfurl'd,
oken is all its promise in the bud!
No more can I redeem you from a world
Where Genius, bringing fire, found only mud
Wherefrom to make an image of itself.
Ah, what to you is left for which to live,
To toil, to suffer? Perishable pelf,
Lust without love, coarse pleasures that contrive

Their own defeat, and joy that never stays!
What with those aspirations will you do,
Which should have been as pinions to upraise
Humanity above the Gods? Pursue
The trivial tenour of your thankless days
From things desired to things possest in vain,
But there my gifts can aid you not, I know!
Alas, and what will now be their worse pain,
In whom those gifts their glowing poësies
With aching pangs commingle? Woe to you,
Poor children of my frustrate enterprise!
Poets, can you be silent?"
That austere
And somber martyr's reminiscent eye
Survey'd the snow-ribb'd crags around him there,
And the lost Titan murmur'd, with a sigh
Soon frozen in their freezing atmosphere,
"If not . . . . well, learn to suffer, even as I!"

A SIGH.

THE Passion and the pain of yore
Slow time hath still'd in vain,
Since all that I can feel no more
I yearn to feel again.

NECROMANCY.

Wouldst thou let me deem thee lost for years,
Youth of my heart? And, now that I have shed
O'er thy false grave long-since-forgotten tears,
And put away my mourning for the dead,
And learn'd to live without thee half content,
What brings thee back alive, tho' in disguise?
For, thou, with this fair stranger's beauty blent,
Art smiling on me thro' another's eyes.

URIEL.

(A MYSTERY.)

DEDICATION.

To you, the dead and gone, bright-eyed Desires
Whose beauty lights no more my dwindled day,
Here, sitting lone beside forsaken fires,
I dedicate this lay.

I.

I HEARD a Voice by night, that call'd to me
"Uriel! Uriel!"
The night was dark, and nothing could I see,
Yet knew I by the Voice that it was She
Whom my soul loves so well
That when She calls Her follower I must be,
Whether She call from Heaven or from Hell.

2.

Then to the Voice "What is thy will?" said I.
But for sole response thro' the darkness fell,
Repeated with the same importunate cry,
Mine own name only, "Uriel! Uriel!"
I could not sleep nor rest upon my bed,
So I rose up, and thro' the husht house pass'd
th steps unlighted (for my lamp was dead)
Out in the heath.

3.

That Voice flew onward fast,
Still calling, and still onward after it
I follow'd, far outsped: for there, beneath
The moonless heaven, not even a marsh-fire lit
Night's fearful sameness; and athwart the heath,
Not fast and free as flew the Voice that led,
But halting oft, my steps went stumblingly.

Each footstep, as it fell, recoil'd with dread
From what it toucht; and, tho' I could not see,
I felt that, where I trod, the plain was spread
With corpses. Heap'd so thick they seem'd to be,
That I, at every moment, fear'd to tread
Upon a dead man's face. Yet, undeterr'd,
My feet obey'd a will not mine, whose spell
Their course constrain'd. For still that Voice I he
And still the Voice call'd "Uriel! Uriel!"

4

At last a livid light began to grow
Low down in heaven. It was the moon that, pent
Behind a slowly crumbling cloud till now,
Athwart thin flakes of worn-out vapour sent
A filmy gleam. And I could see thereby
The corpses that lay litter'd on the heath.

Each white up-slanted face and unshut eye
Was staring at me with the stare of death:
Harness'd in rusty mail from head to heel
Was each dead body: and each dead right hand
Grasp'd by the hilt a blade of bloodstain'd steel,
But broken was each blade. And, while I scann'd
Those dead men's faces, I began to feel
A sadness which I could not understand:
[redacted] to me it seem'd that I had seen,
[redacted]wn, and loved them, somewhere, long ago:
[redacted] or where, and all that was between
[redacted]me and this (if what perplex'd me so
With mimic memories had indeed once been)
I knew no longer. On this fatal plain
Vast battle must have once been waged, so keen
That none was spared by the relentless foe
For unmolested burial of the slain.

5.

And, as I gazed upon them, wondering why
These unrememberable faces seem'd
Mysteriously familiar to mine eye,
The cloudy light that on their corselets gleam'd
Grew clearer, and a sound began to swell
Moaning along the heath: the swarthy sky
Was scourged by a strong wind: the moonlight strayed
Flooding the land: and on the dead men fell
Its frigid splendour. Then stark upright rose
Each dead man, shouting "Uriel! Uriel!"
And in the windy air aloft all those
Arm'd corpses waved their shatter'd swords.

6.

I cried,

"What are ye? and what name is it you bear?
Corpses or ghosts? Is Life with Death allied,

To breed new horrors in this hideous lair
Of Desolation?" And they all replied
"Thine is our name, for thine our Legions were,
And thine would still be, if thou hadst not died.
But corpse or ghost thou art thyself, and how
Should we thy death survive? It is not well
When the dead do not know the dead, nor know
The date of their own death-day, Uriel!
C leader bold in many a fight wast thou,
And we fought bravely. But thy foes and ours
Were s ngest, And the strife is over now,
And be all dead men. And those tall towers
We built are fallen, all our banners torn,
All our swords broken, all our strong watch fires
Quencht, and in death have we been left forlorn
Of sepulture, tho' sons of princely sires,
Born to find burial fair with saints and kings,
Where, over trophied tombs, the taper shines

On tablets rich with votive offerings,
And priestly perfumes soothe memorial shrines.
And that is why we cannot find repose
In the bare quiet of unburied death;
But ever, when at night the wild wind blows
Upon the barren bosom of this heath,
Our dead flesh tingles, and revives, and glows
With the brief passion of a borrow'd breath,
Breathed by the wind: and on as the wind goes
Go with the wind we must, where'er that be,
A lonesome pilgrimage along the night,
Till the wind falls again, and with it we.
Farewell!"

7.

The wild wind swept them from my sight
Even as they spake, and all the heath was bare.
Sighingly the wind ceased. The night was still.

The dead were gone. Only the moonlight there
Upon the empty heath lay clear and chill.
Then I remember'd long-forgotten things,
And all my loss. I could no farther fare
Along that haunted heath ; for my heart's strings
Were aching, gnaw'd by an immense despair.
Flat on the spot where last they stood I fell,
And clutch'd the wither'd fern, as one that clings
[redacted]st to a grave where all he loved lies dead,
[redacted]t, and wept, and wept.
"Rise Uriel,"
[redacted]w still call'd, "and follow me!"
But I could only weep, so vast a well
Of tears within me flow'd. At last I said
"What heart or hope have I to follow thee?
Are not the Legions lost, that at thy call
To mine own overthrow and theirs I led?
For I have seen again their faces all,
And death was all I saw there." "Let them be!"

The Voice replied. "The dead shall live again
When we have reach'd the goal whereto I go,
And there shalt thou rejoin them. Nor till then
Canst thou thyself return to life, for thou
Thyself art also fall'n among the slain.
But look upon me, faithless one, and know
That I am life in death, and joy in pain,
And light in darkness."

8

I look'd up, and saw,
In glory that was not of mere moonlight
(Glory that fill'd me with a great glad awe)
Shining above me, Her my soul loves well,
Like a white Angel. And along the night
Her voice still call'd me "Uriel! Uriel!"
Again I follow'd. And it seem'd that days
And nights, and weeks, and months, and years went by,

As on we went by never-ending ways
Thro' worlds and worlds. And ever was mine eye
Fixt on that beckoning Form with faithful gaze.
And seasons little cared for—shine or shade,
Or heat or cold—pursued us. Many a Spring,
And many a Summer, many an Autumn, stay'd
My panting path, and round me strove to fling
Their fervid arms, and many a Winter made
His frozen fingers meet and fiercely cling
In lean embrace that long my course delay'd,
And Pain and Pleasure both essay'd to wring
My purpose from me. But still, sore afraid
Lest I should lose my Guide by tarrying,
Forward I press'd whenever the Voice said
"Uriel! Uriel! linger not!"

9.

At last
We reach'd what seem'd the end of a dead world.

Wall'd round it was by mountains bare and vast,
And thro' them one thin perilous pathway curl'd
Into an unknown land of ice and snow,
Where nothing lived, nor aught was left to freeze
But frost. There was a heap of bones below;
Above, a flock of vultures. Under these,
Hard by a stream that long had ceased to flow,
A miserable, squalid, lean old man,
Nursing a broken harp upon his knees,
Sat in the frozen pass. His eyes were wan,
But full of spiteful looks. She my soul loved,
Fair as a skyward Seraph on the wing,
Before me up that perilous pathway moved,
Calling me from above, and beckoning.
But he that sat before the pass began
To twang his harp, which had but one shrill string,
(Whose notes like icy needles thro' me ran)
And with a crack'd and creaking voice to sing

"O fool, infatuated fool, forbear!
For yonder is the Land of Ice and Snow,
And She is dead that beckoneth to thee there,
And dead forever are the dead I know."

Whilst thus that lean old man, with eyes aglare,
Sang to his broken harp's one string below,
The vultures scream'd above in the bleak air
"Dead are the dead forever!"

10.

"What art thou,
Malignant wretch?" I cried. The old man said
"I am the Ancient Porter of this Pass,
Beyond which lies the Land of Ice and Snow.
And all the dwellers in that land are dead,
And dead forever are the dead I know.
And this, my harp—I know not when, alas!
But all its strings were broken long ago,

Save one, which time makes tough. . The others were
Of sweeter tone, but this sounds more intense.
And, for my name, some say it is Despair,
And others say it is Experience."

Thereat he laugh'd, and shook his sordid rags,
And his wan eyes with sullen malice gleam'd.
And loud again, upon the icy crags,
In that bleak air above, the vultures scream'd,

SCORN.

I.

DIM on its slighted altar died
The sacred fire no victim fed:
The god, who craved a gift denied,
His own dread image seized instead:
Headlong he hurl'd it the flames among,
Choosing rather self-immolation
Than a form that in vain to a faithless throng
From his shrine appeal'd for a grudged oblation.
The flames around it wreathed:
The image was consumed,
And into ashes fell.
The god upon them breathed,
Their fading spark relumed,
And utter'd this oracle:—

2.

"Go, dust wherein my power hath dwelt,
Avenge on man a wrong divine,
And the proud pain a god hath felt
In some poor human soul enshrine!"
The roused ashes arose and went forth on the wind:
The divinity hid in them, high and low
Hovering, sought where its force might find
Means to greaten, and grow, and glow.
A soul it found at last,
A great soul wrong'd by fame,
A grandeur grown forlorn:
Into that soul it past
Burningly, and became
Wrong'd Grandeur's angel, SCORN.

STRANGERS.

(A RHAPSODY.)

CHILDREN are born, about whose lucid brows
The blue veins, visibly meandering, stream
Transparent: children in whose wistful eyes
Are looks like lost dumb creatures in a crowd,
That roam, and search, and find not what they seek.
These children are life's aliens. The wise nurse
Shakes her head, murmuring "They will not live!"
A piteous prophecy, yet best for them
The death that, pitifully premature,
Remits the pitiless penalty of birth;
Letting the lost ones steal away unhurt,
Because unnoticed, from a world not theirs.

Strangers and star-born strayaways forlorn,

Who come so careless of the outlandish wealth
You carry with you, dropping as you go
Treasures beyond the reach of Orient Kings,
What seek you here where your unvalued gifts
Shall leave you beggars for an alms denied?
Earth yields not their equivalent. No field
So profitless but some poor price it hath;
A spurious picture or a spavin'd horse
May find in time their willing purchasers;
But never for its worth shall you exchange
A soul's unmarketable opulence.
And when at last, of those who (unenrich'd
By your impovrishment) the gift forget,
Your thirst and hunger crave a broken crust,
A drop of water from the wayside well,
Stripes shall correct such importunities.

Linger not! live not! give not! Hide your gifts,
Ungiven, deeper than Remembrance digs

Among the haunted ruins she explores
For riches lost. And if abrupt mischance
Their buried store reveal, without a blush
Disown it, for a lie may sometimes save
A miser's life. The truth would serve as well,
Were truth not unbelievable; for, stored
In coin not current here and gems unprized,
Your treasures are worth nothing to the wretch
They tempt to make them, by a murder, his.
But this the assassins know not, and ill-arm'd,
Ill-arm'd and worse than weaponless, are you!
To whose inefficacious grasp was given
In solemn mockery the seraphic sword
That only archangelic hands can hold.
Your own have clutch'd it by the burning blade,
And, when you wield it, 'tis yourselves you wound.

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You that have FEELING, think you to have all?
Poor fools, and you have absolutely nought!
In reckonings of this world's arithmetic
Everything else is something by itself,
FEELING alone is nothing. Could you add
That nothing to what counts for anything,
Forthwith a tenfold potency perchance
The unreckonable zero might bestow
Upon the reckon'd unit. But what boots
A value so vicarious?
Yours the spell
Whose all-transfigurating sorceries
Convert the dust man grovels in to gold;
Robing the pauper royal in the pomp
Of princely exultations, changing night
To morning, death to life, the wilderness
To paradise; beatifying pain,
Cleansing impurity, and strewing thick

The gulphs of Hell with starry gleams of Heaven.
But use it not! Unsanction'd miracles
Are sentenced sins. Writ large for all to read,
About the world's street corners Reason posts
"BEWARE OF THE MIRACULOUS!" Whereto
Prudence appends, the placard to complete,
"MIRACLES ARE FORBIDDEN!" Use it not,
Your gift unblest! Lo, Virtue's High Priest comes,
Calls the Sanhedrim's long-phylacteried train,
Consults the scriptured scrolls, within them finds
No warrant for the wonders you perform,
And them and you doth anathematise.

Linger not! live not! give not! All your gifts
Shall turn to stones and scourges in the hands
That crave them, and to live is to be lost.

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Thou starry snowflake, whose still flight transforms
The frozen crystal's constellated crown
To an ethereal feather, seek not here,
Celestial stranger, seek not here on earth,
Where Purity were nameless but for thee,
The warmth that wastes, the fervours that defile!
Upon our wither'd branches hang not thou
Thy votive wreaths, nor our bleak paths invest
With thy pale presence! Vainly dost thou cling
About our fasten'd casements, vainly spread
So close beside our doors thy spotless couch.
Behind them dwells Ingratitude. The voice
That welcomed thine arrival will anon
Resent thy lingering, and exclaim "Enough!"
Trust not the looks that smile, the lips that sigh,
"I love thee!" For to-day those words mean "Come!"
To-morrow "Go!" Men's words are numberless,
And yet in man's speech only the same word

Means "No" to-morrow that meant "Yes" to-day.

Linger not, live not, give not, you forlorn
Gift-laden strangers! With your gifts ungiven,
And so at least undesecrated, die!

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What fills with such invincibility
The frail seed striving thro' the stubborn soil?
The sun so long one herbless spot caress'd,
That in the darkling germ beneath it stirr'd
A tender trouble, and that trouble seem'd
A promise. "Can it be, the Sun himself
Hath sought me? He so glorious, he so great,
And I so dark, so insignificant!
Dear Sun, with all the strength thy love reveal'd,
Responding to thy summons, I am here!"

And the rich life of granaried Lybia glows
Revelling already in a single grain.

Doth the Sun answer, "Little one, too much
Thou hast responded, now respond no more"?
No, for throughout the illimitable heights
And deeps of boundless Being, to attain
It scarce suffices, at the most and best,
To tend beyond the unattainable,
And too much love is still not love enough.
The Sun may set, but all his rising wrought
To life's enraptured consciousness remains.
The Sun disowns not, even when he deserts,
What he put forth his fervours to evoke.
Man's love alone its doing disavows,
And makes denial of its dearest deed.

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Beneath a dead bird's long-uncared-for cage,
That hangs forgotten in the cloister'd court
Of some lone uninhabitable house,
From the chink'd pavement slowly creeping comes
A thin weak stem that opens like a heart,
And puts forth tenderly two tiny hands
Of benediction to that cage forlorn,
Then dies, as tho' its little life had done
All it was born to do. The flint-set earth
Requites the dead bird's gift—one casual seed,
And from her stony breast a blossom blows.

But, pouring forth Uranian star-seed, strew
Incipient heavens thro' all the hollowness
Of human gratitude for gifts divine,
And nothing from the sowing of such seed
Shall blossom but the bitterness of death.

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O that the throbbing orb of this throng'd world,
The sun-led seasons, the revolving years,
Day with his glory, night with all her stars,
The present, and the future, and the past,
And earth, and heaven, should but a bauble be!
The unvalued gift of an extravagant soul,
Given undemanded, broken by a breath,
The sport of one exorbitant desire,
The easy spoil of one minute mischance,
And all for nothing! What? the unheedful flint
Spares room to house the blossom that requites
A chance seed fallen from a dead bird's cage,
And nothing, nothing, in the long long years,
That bring to other losses soon or late
The loss of loss remember'd, shall arise?
Nothing, not even a penitential tear,
A fleeting sigh, a momentary smile,
The benediction of a passing thought

Of pitiful remembrance—to repay
The quite-forgotten gift of too much love!

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All other loss comparison avails
To lessen, and all other ills worse ill
May mitigate. Defeated monarchs find
Cold comfort left in Cæsar's legions lost:
The ruin'd merchant in the bankrupt State:
The bedless beggar in the bed-rid lord.
The sight of Niobe dries many tears,
And by the side of open graves are graves
Long seal'd, like old wounds cicatrised by time.
But this is an immitigable ill,
A lastingly incomparable loss,
A forfeiture of refuge that exiles
Its victim even from the lonest lodge

Where Misery's leprous outcasts may at least
Commiserate each other. The excess
Of one o'erweening moment hath ursurpt
The whole dominion of eternity;
Yet even the usurpation was a fraud,
For what seem'd all was nothing; and its dupes,
Who mourn that moment's loss, have with it lost
The right to say that it was ever theirs.

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Sceptic, approach and, into this abysm
Of torment gazing, tremblingly believe!
Behold in Hell the soul's appalling proof
Of her dread immortality! What else
Could for a moment undestroy'd endure
The least of such annihilating pangs?
Transmute them into corporal sufferings. Hurl

Their victim from the visionary top
Of some sky'd tower, and on its flinted base
Shatter his crumpled carcass: if the heart
Still beats, lay bare each lacerated nerve
And sear with scorching steel the sensitive flesh:
Or lift the bleeding ruins of the wretch,
Lay them in down, bandage with cruel care
The broken limbs, and nurse to life again
Their swooning anguish: then from eyes that burn
Chase slumber, and to lips that parch deny
Release from thirst. It boots not! Flesh and blood
Death to his painless sanctuary takes,
And life's material mechanism stops.
The first pang is the last. But all these pangs
(And add to these what worse, if worse there be,
The torturer's teeming art hath yet devised)
Attain not the tenth part of those endured
Without cessation by the soul that loves,

When love is only suffering. What escape,
What refuge, from self-torment hath the soul?
Or what for love is left unoverthrown
By love's own overthrow?
The growth of love,
Outgrowing the wide girdle of the world,
Hath in itself absorb'd sun, moon, and stars,
Life, Death, and Thought's illimitable realm,
Leaving in Time no moment, and in Space
No point, its omnipresence kindles not
To palpitant incandescence—and what then?
A word, nay not so much, a breath unbreathed,
A look, and all this universe of love,
Cramm'd with the curse of Tantalus, becomes
A pitiless infinitude of fierce
Importunate impossibilities,
Where nothing is but what may never be.

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Fond wretch, with those insatiable eyes,
Among the ruins of a world destroy'd
What art thou seeking? Its destroyer? Look!
He stands before thee. And thou knowst him not.
The traitor of thy perisht universe
Hath perisht with it. Nay, that world and he,
Whose creature and creator was thyself,
Save in thyself existed not. Away,
Disown'd survivor of what never was!

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There is a sigh that hath no audible sound,
And, like a ghost that hath no visible form,
Breathing unheard thro' solitudes unseen,

Its presence haunts the Desert of the Heart.
Fata Morgana! Fair Enchantress, Queen
Of all that ever-quivering quietness,
There dost thou dreaming dwell, and there create
Those fervid desolations of delight,
Where dwell with thee the joys that never were!

And, when in darkness fades the phantom scene,
The wizard stars that nightly trembling light
That undiscover'd loneliness are looks
From eyes that love no longer. All the winds
That whisper there are breaths of broken vows
And perjured promises. The pale mirage
That haunts the simmering hyaline above
Is all the work of ghosts, and its bright wastes
Teem with fantastic specters of the swoons
Of prostrate passions, hopes become despairs,
And dreams of bliss unblest. In that weird sky

There is no peace, but a perpetual trance
Of torturous ecstasy. Vext multitudes
Of frantic apparitions mingle there,
And part, and vanish, waving vaporous arms
Of supplication—to each other lured,
And by each other pantingly repulsed.
The goblin picture of a passionate world
Painted on nothingness! And all the sands,
Heaved by the sultry sighings of the heart
Of this unquietable solitude,
Are waves that everlastingly roll on
O'er wrecks deep-sunken in a shoreless sea
Whose bed is vast oblivion. Out of sight,
Into that sea's abysmal bosom pour'd,
Flow all desires unsatisfied, all pains
Unpitied, all affections unfulfill'd,
And sighs, and tears, and smiles misunderstood.

There all the adventurous argosies that sail'd

In search of undiscover'd worlds, reduced
To undiscoverable wrecks, remain.
And there perchance, at last, no more estranged
From all around them, since not stranger they
Than all things else, where all things else are strange,
In that wide strangeness unrejected rest
The world's rejected strangers—loves unloved,
And lives unlived, and longings unappeased.

ALLEGRO, ANDANTE, ADAGIO.

1.

A SAGE had thro' the world fared far and wide:
And what had made on him the most impression,
Friends ask'd him: to whose question he replied
By this confession:

2.

"A traveller, whom it was my chance to meet
Departing and arriving. For this man
Mounted upon a fiery steed and fleet
His way began;

3.

And yet more eager even than his horse
The man himself. With whip, and spur, and cry
So fast he urged it on its rapid course
That by and by

4.

The horse, o'er-ridden, on the road expired:
To go afoot its rider was constrain'd;
But now the man, although himself untired,
From haste refrain'd;

5.

And, turning neither to the left nor right,
He with deliberate stride began to wend
Right onward, resolute to reach ere night
His journey's end.

6.

A peasant proffer'd him an ass for sale:
That mode of travelling seem'd not to his mind:
Scornful he scann'd the beast from head to tail—
'Twas lame and blind:

7.

But, since no better means remain'd, he bought
And mounted it. The ass at a snail's pace
Jogg'd onward awkwardly, not caring aught
For speed or grace;

8.

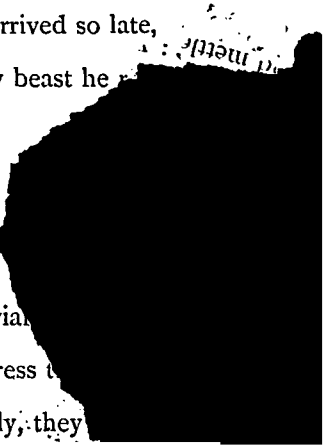
Yet, all ungoaded, ere the day was done
It brought the traveller to his place of rest.
'Twas there I met him, when the sinking sun
Was in the west.

9.

Mean was the hostel, but of wide resort.
He ask'd me how 'twas named, then sigh'd 'Already
As tho' to him the journey seem'd too short,
The pace too steady.

10.

Whereat I marvell'd that a man who show'd
Such haste at starting, and arrived so late,
Should sigh to quit the sorry beast he
When reach'd the gate."

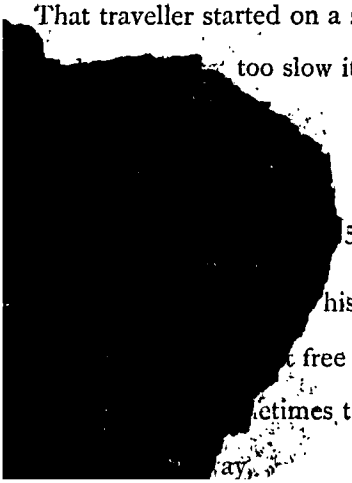


The listeners, when this trivia
Found nothing in it to impress
For such things happen daily, they
To all mankind.

12.

"And for that reason, and because you say
That such things happen in the common range
Of every man's experience every day,
I find it strange,"

14.

The Sage replied, "Upon his journey bound,
That traveller started on a steed all fire

too slow its space he found

5.

his courser carried
free to pause or stray,
etimes turn'd aside, or tarried
ay,

16.

Less haste was not more leisure: the man still
Kept the main road, nor paused to pluck a flower,
Or snatch a solace from the wayside rill,
The woodland bower;

17.

Desiring only ere the day was done
To reach, tho' with diminisht speed at best,
By pertinaciously still plodding on,
His destined rest:

18.

Yet when his sole means left were those com
The sloth and weakness of a grizzled ass,
He found the pace too swift, and sigh'd
'So soon? Alas!'"

19.

"Your traveller was a fool," the listeners cried
"But what of that? 'Tis nothing strange or ne
"My traveller was a man," the Sage replied,
"Like all of you."

20.

"For some of you are riding," said the Sage,
"A swift horse, your still swifter spirits spurn:
And some an ass: some walk. Youth, Manhood, Age,
Each in its turn,

21.

...ie means that bring man, slow or fast,
... grieves to be. The slowest pace
...e swiftest, as he nears at last
...ace.

22.

... of all the things I've seen
... my wonder than this traveller's lo
... is that?" they ask'd. "Yourselves,
...tween,
...o wonder not."

THE END.

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